



Pearls of the Heart

by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al Jīlānī

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*A collection of 18 of the Shaikh’s Sermons
compiled by Sayyid Muḥammad
Saif ad-Dīn al-Jīlānī*

Publisher's Preface

I have included the Turkish edition's Introduction with this collection because it has much that is useful to contribute regarding the blessed Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and this collection of sermons.

However, I need to mention a couple of anomalies I spotted in it which need to be pointed out for the benefit of the reader:

Although the author of the Turkish introduction expresses doubt about the matter, it is very much consistent with the historical facts that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī descended from both of the grandsons of the Holy Prophet, upon whom be peace; on his father's side from Sayyid al-Ḥasan as-Sibt, the son of our patron, the Commander of the Believers, Abu'l -Ḥusain 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and on his mother's side from Imām al-Humām Ḥusain, the martyr of Karbalā, may Allāh be pleased with them all. Numerous genealogies collected from different sources attest to this fact.

Next, in the list of literary works of the Shaikh, the author of the Turkish introduction attributes a work named *Bhajat al-Asrār* to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, whereas this work is, in fact, a well-known biography of the Shaikh, authored by Shaikh Abu'l Ḥasan 'Alī Shat-tanāwfi of Egypt (d. A.H. 713/1314 C.E.).

There is something so uplifting in the sermons of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir that the reader cannot help but find himself or herself inspired, strengthened and renewed in pursuit of the spiritual path.

May the readers of this short collection find benefit from this and find their faith increased and themselves refreshed. Amīn, O Lord of All the Worlds!

Ruslan Moore
July 2010

In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful,
the All-Compassionate

Bismi'llāhi 'r-Raḥmāni 'r-Raḥīm

Introduction to the Turkish Translation

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī
(may Allāh sanctify his innermost being)

His agnomen is Muḥyi'd-Dīn Abū Muḥammad. He was born in A.H. 470/1077 C.E., in the province of Gilān or Jīlān to the South of the Caspian Sea. He died in Baghdād in A.H. 561/1166 C.E., at the age of ninety-one.

On his father's side, it is said that he traced his descent to the venerable Ḥasan, the beloved grandson of our master, Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). According to some historians and researchers, however, this claim is not consistent with the historical facts. They maintain that it was promulgated later by his grandsons, in order to elevate his worth. As far as we are concerned, it is not important whether this claim is valid or unfounded. What is really important is the fact that the venerable ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being) revived the Sunna of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). It is more appropriate to assess the worth and value of that exalted person from this point of view. It is also known that his father and his mother were among the saints.

His education:

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being) acquired most of his education in Baghdād. He studied grammar, syntax and similar sciences under Imām at-Tabrīzī, the Prophetic tradition [*ḥadīth*] under Hibatu’llāh al-Mubārak and Abū Naṣr Muḥammad, and Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] under the greatest jurists of Baghdād at that time. He was especially well-versed in the jurisprudence of ash-Shāfi‘ī, and he most often issued his formal legal opinions in accordance with the doctrine of the Shāfi‘ī school.

He learned Ṣūfism from Abu’l-Khair Muḥammad ibn Muslim ad-Dabbās, the famous Ṣūfī and devout worshipper, and this became his favorite subject from then on. He is also said to have served at one time as keeper of the mausoleum of Abū Ḥanīfa, who is known as *al-Imām al-A‘zam* [the Supreme Imām].

His characteritic style:

He was a powerful orator, an eloquent preacher, and a Ṣūfī endowed with abstinence and true devotion. As mentioned above, he received his training in Ṣūfism from his teacher, Abu’l-Khair, and it was this person who conferred upon him the tattered cloak [*khirqā*] of Ṣūfism. The spiritual insight of Abu’l-Khair was thereupon instilled in him, and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being) immediately experienced ecstasy. One must therefore not forget that he has attained to a preeminent position among the famous Ṣūfis.

As well as being an expert in the art of public speaking, he had an excellent awareness of people’s psychological condition. He would address a crowded audience with his extensive culture and knowledge, and he would leave everyone charmed and astonished. The audience he attracted became too large to be contained in the mosque or the schoolhouse, so ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being) was eventually compelled to lecture in the open air. He used to lecture three times a week in various places. Far from inflicting boredom on his audience, he would every day increase their enthusiasm and their delight. Groups of people would travel great distances to attend his lecture, and, on the day of

his lecture, the streets of Baghdād would assume the appearance of a busy marketplace.

The nature of his knowledge:

He was an extremely erudite theologian. He was well-versed in the sciences of the Prophetic tradition, Islāmic jurisprudence and Şūfism. He possessed knowledge concerning seventy-three sects. He was profoundly well-informed about questions of doctrinal belief. He took a great interest in the explanations and opinions of the old Qur'ānic commentators. He was in the fullest sense a Perfect Human Being [*Insān Kāmil*], and this accounts for his being called “the Gray Falcon [*al-Bāz al-Ashhab*]” and “the Sultan of the Saints [*Sulṭān al-Awliyā'*].”

His literary works:

As many as ten literary works can definitely be attributed to the venerable 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being):

1. *al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq* [Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth].
2. *Futūḥ al-Ghaib* [Revelations of the Unseen].
3. *al-Faḥ ar-Rabbānī* [The Sublime Revelation].
4. *Ḥizbu'l-Bashā'ir* [The Litany of Glad Tidings].
5. *al-Mawāhib ar-Raḥmāniyya* [Gifts of Divine Mercy].
6. *Bahjat al-Asrār* [The Garden of Secrets].
7. *Jilā' al-Khāṭir* [The Removal of Care].
8. *Yawāqīt al-Ḥikam* [Sapphires of Wisdom]
9. *al-Fuyūdāt ar-Rabbāniyya* [Emanations of Lordly Grace].
10. *al-Mawā'iz wa 'l-Khuṭab* [Preachings and Sermons]. (Collected and compiled in book form by other people.)

His charismatic talents [karāmāt]:

Many of his charismatic talents (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being) are discussed in works like *Tafriḥ al-Khāṭir* [The Gladdening of the Feelings], to name only one of several.

Special works have been written, but most of them are not healthy, because they fall outside of the Islāmic framework. Nevertheless, his noteworthy charismatic talents are not lacking. In any case, the venerable ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being) is certainly a great saint and spiritual guide. Of this no one has any doubt. He has caused many perverts to embark on the right path, and to attain to right guidance. This can be considered sufficient proof of his sincere devotion.

His beneficial sermons and his valuable literary works, addressed to our spirits, preserve their effectiveness to this very day. Those of his sermons that we have translated are only a small selection, but they are spiritually uplifting for believers who read with longing and ardent yearning.

Our booklet has made available in translation the incomplete work by Sayyid Muḥammad Saif ad-Dīn al-Jīlānī, entitled *ad-Durar as-Saniyya* [The Shining Pearls] (published in Istanbul in A.H. 1302), which came into our possession. It summarizes about twenty select sermons of the venerable ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being) and one testament of his.

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the One whose words are always effective!



First Sermon

Untitled

My young brother, you must first pay attention to your own self and give it good advice, and only then attend to others. Concentrate on dealing with your own deficiencies, and do not concern yourself with those of other people!

You must exercise great care, since it takes time to make the necessary correction and improvement, and the remaining days of your life are few. Yes indeed, you have only a few days left. If you cannot know your own self, and if you cannot understand your inner world, you must realize that you will not be capable of saving others. If this is your condition, how can you neglect your own self and provide guidance for others? Only those endowed with insight (meaning those fortunate ones who really know the Truth and act accordingly) are capable guiding other people and showing them the way. Only those who are very skillful swimmers can rescue others from the ocean of sin and heedlessness. In other words, only those who truly know Allāh are capable of directing other people toward Allāh. As for those miserable wretches who do not know Allāh, how can they provide guidance for this lofty endeavor?

Make good use of your intelligence! You are not entitled to have any say in Allāh's management of His own property. Once you recognize completely that everything of yours is His, you will dearly love His perfect management of everything, and you will only work for Him, for Him Alone, not for any other. This can only be achieved with the heart, not with the idle chatter of the tongue.

As you must never forget, if the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*tawḥīd*] is displayed at the door of the house, while polytheism [*shirk*] lurks inside the house, this is hypocrisy [*nifāq*] its very self. If you do

not comprehend what this really means, woe unto you! Your tongue is proclaiming true devotion, but your heart is rejecting it. Your tongue is expressing gratitude, but your heart is turning away from it.

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is referring to this in the Sacred Tradition [*Hadith Qudsi*]:

O son of Adam, My goodness is coming down toward you, while your wickedness is rising up toward Me.

Woe unto you, and again woe unto you! You claim to be the servant of Allāh, although you are bowing your neck to other masters. If you were really and truly His servant, you would treat others with hostility and preserve friendship for Him (Exalted is He). As a matter of fact, your friendship and your hostility are linked to your selfish and worldly interests.

You must abandon this kind of idolatry, this dualism, and recognize the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) as One, because He is the Creator of all things. If you think the opposite, you cannot be regarded as intelligent! No things exist that are not stored in Allāh's treasury. Everything is found there, as indicated by the Qur'ānic verse:

And naught there is, but with Us	<i>wa in min shai' in illā</i>
are the stores thereof,	<i>'inda-nā khazā'inu-h:</i>
and We send it down only in a	<i>wa mā nunazzilu-hu</i>
known measure. (15:21)	<i>illā bi-qadarin ma'lūm.</i>

O my young brother, when you break and tear the net of the secondary cause [*sabab*], you will be able to attain to the Originator [*Musabbib*]. When you tear habit apart and pass beyond it, habit will be brought under your control. For someone who serves from the heart, service will be performed. To someone who practices obedience, obedience will be paid. To someone who does a kind favor, a kind favor will be done. By someone who makes an effort to show friendliness, friendliness will be received. If someone acts with humility, he will be exalted. If someone refines his conduct and behavior, he will experience nearness. Yes indeed, fine conduct will bring you near to the Lord of Truth, while bad behavior will distance you from Him. Fine conduct is a form of worship and obedience to

Allāh, while bad behavior is a kind of disobedience and impertinence toward Him (Exalted is He).

O traveler on the path of the Truth! You must not postpone the business of calling yourself to account. You must make haste in performing self-examination in this world, before the Hereafter arrives.

Apart from this, three other things are incumbent on the believing servant in all conditions and circumstances:

1. To comply with Allāh's commandments unconditionally and without reservation.
2. To abstain from everything that He has forbidden.
3. To demonstrate contentment with the decree of destiny.

Yes indeed, a true believer's way of living and conducting himself will never be devoid of these three observances. This means that the most proper path consists of his committing his aspiration to his heart, making sure that this is understood by his lower self, and employing the limbs and organs of his body in accordance with this standard, in all his conditions and situations.

O my young brother! Whenever your faith takes a turn toward weakness, you must make a very serious effort to deal with your lower self, its instability and its inadequacies! While making progress on this path, you must not become preoccupied with your wife and children, your neighbors, your close relatives, your fellow townsmen and your environment. That is because your inner world is easily shattered by such distractions, reduced to a state where selfish instinct and lustful desire have come to prevail over faith and spiritual wisdom. You must set this straight before you can proceed. Then, once your faith has been reinforced, you must attend again to your wife and children, your kinfolk and your relationships, and the society in which you live. You must beware of setting out in these directions, however, as long as you have not donned the armor of true devotion, as long as you have not placed the helmet of faith upon your heart, as long as the sword of the affirmation of Oneness is not held in your hand, and as long as the arrows of acceptance of your supplication are not in your quiver. Yes indeed, in this situation you must mount the horse of enabling grace,

and learn well how to enter the fray and attack, how to strike with the sword, how to thrust with the spear, and how to escape the blows that come your way. Then you must go on the offensive against the enemies of the Lord of Truth (Exalted is He).

At that point, Divine assistance will come to you from six directions [from in front and behind, from right and left, from above and below]. When you have received this gracious favor, you will finally be able to rescue your fellow creatures from the hand of the devil, and you will be able to guide them toward the gate of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). In this situation, you will command them to perform the work of the people of the Garden of Paradise, and you will keep them away from the deeds of the people of Hell. That is because you have now become able to grasp what the Garden of Paradise and Hell really mean, and you can identify the inhabitants of these two abodes.

If someone attains to this spiritual station, the dense veils will be removed from the eye of his heart. In whichever of the six directions he looks, the veils on that side will be pierced and fall away. When he raises the head of the heart, he will be able to see the Throne and the heavens. When he bows toward the ground, he will be able to witness the layers of the earth and the dwellings of the jinn that exist therein.

There is one single cause of all these things we have mentioned, and that is genuine faith and recognition of the Lord of Truth, at the same time as knowing the wisdom thereof.

Once you have attained to this spiritual station, you must leave your fellow creatures at the door of the Lord of Truth! Prior to this, you must be extremely careful to avoid committing any sinful act of disobedience. That is because, if you are not present at the door of the Lord of Truth, yet you summon your fellow creatures to go there, this is a serious offense. The consequence of this offense is so dire that, however much you wish to forge ahead, you will keep falling down, and however hard you try to make upward progress, you will fail in every attempt. In this state, nothing you have to say is of any concern to the righteous. You are merely a prattler spouting empty words, a heartless tongue, an outer shell with no inner content, a

public figure with no private life, a retreat to the rear with no frontal attack. Your sword is a plank, your arrow is a match stick. You are a coward, you have no courage at all. The simplest arrow could kill you and send you to your doom.

You must pay careful attention [in case you misunderstand me], for there is no enmity between us, and I am not setting you on a wrong path in Allāh's religion. I have experienced the training provided by the rasping words of the Shaikhs, and by the harsh climate of exile and poverty. From this point of view, if a word from me to you is clearly meaningful, you should know that it comes from Allāh's side, so accept it with perfect respect! That is because He is the One who is causing me to speak. You must always comply with the Truth, and never turn toward heretical innovations. You must practice worshipful obedience, and you must not be stubborn. You must be patient, so do not complain and behave with impatience. You must be steadfast, so do not show signs of boredom. You must be purposeful, so do not hesitate. You must be hopeful (expecting the gracious favor and providence of the Lord of Truth), so do not fall into despair. You must be a brother, so do not be one of those who are hostile to one another. You must gather together for the sake of worshipful obedience, so do not become dispersed and separated. You must love one another, so do not hate. You must keep yourself clean and free from sins, so do not get covered in dirt by falling into the swamp of sin and disobedience. You must adorn yourself by practicing servitude to your Lord. You must not be separated from His lofty door. You must face toward Him, so do not turn your back. You must repent, so do not put yourself to shame.

You must mention your shortcomings constantly, by night and by day, and present them to your Creator. On no account must you neglect to act on this instruction. It is hoped that you will be treated with compassion, that you will attain to blissful happiness, and that you will be saved from Hell and find the road to the Garden of Paradise. It is hoped that you will meet Allāh, and that you will acquire the supreme bounties in the Abode of Peace, the everlasting hours. It is hoped that you will survive eternally in this condition, that you will ride the most beautiful means of transport, and that you will be

charmed and enchanted by the houries, the various lovely perfumes, and the melodies that captivate the heart.

As the final result, you will be promoted to the exalted stations, together with the Messengers and Prophets, the champions of the Truth, the martyrs and the righteous.

O believers who wish to travel for all eternity on the road of happiness! Do not be together with those who are deaf, who do not take the advice contained in my wise counsel, and who do not act in accordance with what they have heard. Try to be together with those whose eyes and ears are open, and whose hearts are wide-awake.

You must not forget that losing your religion is the consequence of these four things:

1. You do not act in accordance with what you know.
2. You act on the basis of what you do not know.
3. You do not endeavor to learn what you do not know, so you remain ignorant. (This is despite the fact that you are commanded to acquire knowledge from the cradle to the grave.)
4. You prevent other people from learning the things they do not know. (You are generally an obstacle. It is a foul crime to shut the door of knowledge, to be a barrier to those who wish to enter by that door.)



Second Sermon

Contentment with the Decree of Destiny

O my young brother, traveler on the path of the Truth! Once you have leaned on the cushion of patience, girded yourself with the sword of contentment, and waited with complete conviction for the moments that give happiness and joy, you must go to sleep without any hesitation, with the understanding of a worshipful servant, beneath the gutter of destiny!

If you succeed in attaining to this degree, then, from His abundant generosity and His gracious favor, Allāh (Exalted is He), the One who predestines everything and absolutely never errs in His predestination, will pour down upon you things you could not have asked for and could not even have desired.

O my brother, candidate for everlasting bliss! When a sickness befalls you and comes to pay you a visit, you must greet it with the respectful hospitality of patience. Until the remedy for it is found, you must stay calm and hopeful. Then, when the cure is found, you must greet it with the hand of thankfulness. You must not forget for an instant that Allāh (Exalted is He) is the One who really gives healing.

Once you have climbed to the level of being in this spiritual state, you will have attained to the right way of dealing with a transitory life.

Yes indeed, O my brother! In relation to things that are foreordained by the Lord of Truth, there must be surrender to Him Alone. Then you must stand up together with Him (in the sense that your movements must be designed to earn His good pleasure). Everything needs a foundation, then an organization and a construction. You must understand this wisdom well, and persist in this by night and by day, at almost every moment.

O pauper, I am speaking to you! To long for wealth that will make you conceited and forgetful of the Lord of Truth, that can become the cause of your perdition.

You too, O my sick brother! You must not wish for a fruitless well-being, and you must never forget that Allāh (Exalted is He) is the One who provides the real well-being, for you will otherwise suffer ruination. (If well-being is devoid of any spiritual values, it is the riding beast of the lower self and carnal lust, so do not mount such a beast and ride on your desire!)

Make good use of your intelligence! You must take proper care of the fruits of faith, so that your conduct may be worthy of praise. You must experience contentment with the quantity given to you from the stores of sustenance, by the gracious favor of the Lord of Truth. In full awareness of where it comes from, you must not wish for more, since anything that the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has given or will give to you, if it is given because of a host of unconscious wishes, can result in sorrow and grief. Yes indeed, I have experienced this very many times. Before he makes a wish, the servant should wait for permission to make it with his heart; that is to say, he must receive a spiritual signal to this effect. When such a signal and command occurs, only then is the servant worthy of blessing in the things he seeks, and sorrows are banished from him.

Let us hope that most of your requests are worthy and beneficial, and that your wish may always be acceptable in this world and the Hereafter. You must be content with this and let it suffice you. Do not relate to Allāh like a spoiled child in the rude state of confused uncertainty (left free to choose one of two things). A bullying attitude toward Allāh will eventually destroy you. You must not adopt a forceful attitude toward Allāh and His creatures, by wielding your youth, your strength, your wealth and your property, because He is the One who grips you, twists you and turns you with mighty power. As you must not forget, if you adopt such an attitude toward him, His treatment of you will be very painful and severe.

Beware, beware! Do not quarrel with anyone over things that should be appreciated, because these things are made available to

you at one time, but at another time they leave your hand and go away. When that time comes, you will be devastated by the sadness of losing your blessing. You will fall head over heels from the level you have reached, and be left in a state of shame and disgrace. How can your quarreling, brawling and squabbling be any substitute for the feeling preferred by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? This is quite impossible. Where the provision of sustenance is concerned, whatever the knowledge and foreordainment of the Lord of Truth may be (Almighty and Glorious is He), that is how it has been decreed in sempiternity. This being so, if you quarrel about the sempiternal knowledge of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), with regard to yourself or someone else, you will fall from the sight of His mercy, and you will sink into lower and lower degradation. Your knowledge will have given you no benefit in the end, because it had given you no benefit at the beginning. Allāh (Exalted is He) refers to this in His saying:

And faces on that day will	<i>wa wujūhun</i>
be despondent.	<i>yawma'idhin bāsira:</i>
You will know that some great	<i>taẓunnu an yuf'ala</i>
disaster is about to fall on them.	<i>bi-hā fāqira.</i>
(75:24,25)	

When your knowledge has not given you any benefit, you must repent to Allāh at once. The boat of the heart must be moved in the tears of the eye, so that it may be firmly moored.

Intelligent is he who finds the way to escape from quarreling. He is content with the feeling preferred by Allāh, and he does not reach out toward the feeling of any other.

You must wait with patience for the affliction He has sent down upon you to be removed.

Beware of losing all hope! In the wake of every distress there is delight. Allāh is every day about some awesome business. To one set of people after another He presents different situations. In this alteration you must be together with Him, never abandon your patience,

and always be content with His predestination. That is because you cannot know what to expect, and you may suddenly notice that Allāh is bringing a brand-new situation into view.

In keeping with your patient endurance, He will remove the affliction from you and replace it, providing you instead with something you will dearly love. You will thus begin to love Him, and He will begin to love you. However, if you complain about the affliction when it comes, and if you turn your face away from the Lord of Truth, the affliction will weigh upon you with increasing heaviness, and your punishment will thereby be increased.

Because of your turning your face away from Allāh, and because of your quarreling with Him, you become submissive to many of the unlawful desires of your lower self, comply with that lower self, pursue your personal interests, love this world and greedily seek to amass what it has to offer.

○ my young brother! You must give up wishing for things, whether or not they are allotted by destiny. That is because your wishing for something that has been allotted yields nothing but an unnecessary weariness. As for your wishing for something that has not been allotted, that yields nothing but anger and disappointment. This is why the Prophet (may Allāh the Exalted bless him and give him peace) once said:

Among the punishments inflicted by Allāh (Exalted is He) upon His servant, one is the search for what has not been allotted to him by destiny.

○ my brother, wishing to learn the Truth!

You must not complain to those created by the Creator. You must address your complaint to the Master who has power over everything, not to any other.

Among the inexhaustible treasures of real goodness and beauty, one is concealment of secrets, misfortunes, sickness and charitable giving. While making a charitable gift with your right hand, you must be very careful not to let your left hand know about this.

One day in my dream, a man asked me: “What conduct brings the human being near to Allāh?” To this I replied: “There is a beginning

to this, and there is also an end: As for its beginning, it is being virtuous and guarding against things that are unlawful and dubious.

As for its end, it is contentment, surrender and absolute trust.”



Third Sermon

Sainthood [*Wilāya*]

Allāh's saintly servants (His friends) are deaf and blind in relation to other people. When their hearts experience nearness to Allāh, they do not hear the speech of any other, and they do not see any other. Nearness enchants and captivates them, and Divine awe causes them to transcend their ordinary selves. Loving affection binds them to the presence of their Beloved.

They are now at a point between the manifestations of the attribute of Majesty [*Jalāl*] and the attribute of Beauty [*Jamāl*], unable to incline to the right or to the left. They have a front with nothing on its side. Human beings, the jinn, the angels and all other creatures are at their service. Knowledge and wisdom are their means of transport, and noble virtue is their nourishment. Intimate friendship quenches their thirst. They eat from the gracious favor of Allāh, and drink from the wine of friendship. The speech of ordinary people does not hold their attention. Yes, they are in a valley, while ordinary people are in a different valley. They command the people to do what Allāh has commanded. Acting on behalf of the Prophets, they forbid the people to do those things that Allāh has forbidden. In reality, these are the heirs of the Prophets. Their only preoccupation is to direct the people toward the door of the Lord of Truth. They put things in their proper place, and they operate with wisdom. They give to the righteous whatever they deserve, and they deprive no one of his rightful due, setting nothing aside for themselves. Only for Allāh's sake do they love, and only for Allāh's sake do they hate. Yes, all things are for the sake of Allāh, not for the sake of any other.

If these superior qualities, which we have listed above, are brought to perfection in someone, Divine fellowship will be perfected for him,

and the doors of salvation and success will be opened for him. Human beings, the jinn, the angels, the earths and the skies will then begin to love him.

I am now calling out to you, O hypocrite! O miserable wretch, forgetful of the Lord of Truth, at the service of creatures and material means! In spite of the evils within you, which you carry in your inner world, you are striving to acquire the status of the saints. This effort is in vain, because you have no nobility and no honor whatsoever. You must first surrender correctly to the Lord of Truth, then repent, then become well-versed in these particular subjects, and put them into practice with sincere devotion; otherwise you cannot find right guidance.

Allāh (Exalted is He) instructs His Prophets with His Own Speech, while He educates His saintly servants with His Own communication [*ḥadīth*]. What is meant by “communication” is the inspiration [*ilhām*] that is instilled in the hearts of the saints. That is because the saints are the heirs of the Prophets, their deputies and their servants.

The saints of Allāh are at the spiritual station of proper conduct in His presence. They make no movement without explicit leave from the Lord of Truth, and they do not even take a single step. Unless a clear permission is inspired in their hearts, they do not eat things that are normally allowed, they do not dress themselves, they do not marry, and they do not engage in any business activity. They are together with the Lord of Truth. Their hearts and their eyes are thoroughly focused on a single purpose. Apart from communing with their Lord, with their hearts in this world and with their bodies in the Hereafter, they have no determined resolution. In other words, they cannot attain to the comfort of the heart, so long as they have not achieved communion with Allāh.

O my young brother! The whole of life consists of two steps: One of your steps is in this world, the other in the Hereafter. One of your steps is connected with yourself, the other with your fellow creatures. You must take your step, but its completion is a matter for Allāh. Yes, setting out comes from you, but bringing to the destination comes from Allāh.

Supposing that you adjust your state and your condition, your speech and your behavior, in accordance with the external rules, none of your fellow creatures can succeed in spoiling it. Supposing that you do not act thus, however, your condition will not rest on a firm foundation, and you will not be able to attain to any spiritual station. In this state and in this wretched situation, the heart of the champions of the Truth will be angry with you and will not wish to see you.

O you who are bogged down in the swamp of ignorance! I have this to say to you all: You must attend the meeting of the scholars with propriety and good manners, and sit in that meeting with perfect propriety. While doing so, you must also refrain from arguing against them. In order to learn from them, to profit from their knowledge, and to obtain their blessing, you must take constant care to benefit from them.

At the meeting of those endowed with intimate knowledge, you must not neglect to sit with propriety and observe polite silence. While aspiring to those fine spiritual states of the ascetics, you must also sit together with them.

That is because a person who is endowed with intimate knowledge acquires increasing nearness to Allāh from one hour to the next. His respect and his humble submissiveness toward his Lord are refreshed at every moment. Recognizing his humility at the door of the Lord of Truth, he adopts a lowly and unpretentious attitude. He then ascends to a high degree, where he is politely and respectfully afraid of those who are present at that level, while he is not afraid of those who are absent from it. His fear increases in proportion to his drawing near to the Lord of Truth. In proportion to his witnessing, his grief and his sorrow also increase.

When someone knows Allāh, he reaches the state of speaking with the tongue of his lower self, the tongue of his natural constitution, the tongue of his carnal desires, and, finally, the tongue of his whole being. As for the tongue of the heart, the innermost being, and the spiritual state and station, it speaks in order to reveal those blessings that have been received. In order to benefit from this, the saints

remain seated in silence, drinking the wine that spurts out from their hearts, from the pool of the heart.

This being so, if someone spends a great deal of time in the company of those endowed with intimate knowledge, he will come to know himself, and, in the atmosphere of this knowledge, he will bow his neck in humility toward his Lord. [As the Prophet said (Allāh bless him and give him peace):]

If someone truly knows himself,	<i>man 'arafa nafsa-hu fa-qad</i>
he truly knows his Lord.	<i>'arafa Rabba-h.</i>

That is because the self is a thick veil between the servant and his Lord. When someone knows himself, he removes that veil and becomes humbly respectful toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His creatures.

This you should know: If a person's own self is made known to him, it means that the good things of both this world and the Hereafter have been ordained for him. From then on, that person's outer aspect is preoccupied with giving thanks for this, and his inner being is preoccupied with giving praise for it. His outer being is disorganized, while his inner being is well coordinated. In order to conceal or disguise this spiritual state, his joy is kept within him, while his sorrow is shown in his outward appearance.

In this respect, the state of the person endowed with intimate knowledge is in sharp contrast with the state of the simple believer, since the latter's sorrow is kept within his heart, while his joy shows on his face. He stands at the door like a young attendant. He does not know what will be required of himself. He cannot tell whether he will be accepted, whether he will be turned away, whether the door will be opened, or whether the door will stay shut.

As for someone who truly knows himself, he is thus in contrast with the simple believer in all his states. The simple believer is endowed with a spiritual state [*ḥāl*], and the state is changeable, subject to alteration. The person who knows himself is endowed with a spiritual station [*maqām*], and the station is firmly established, not subject to alteration. Because of the alteration of his state, the simple believer is

afraid that his faith may not be absolutely real. His sorrow is therefore always in his heart, while his joy is always on his face. He carries his sorrow with him wherever he goes. His conversation makes you smile, but his heart is broken by his sorrow.

In the case of someone who truly knows himself, his sorrow shows on his face. That is because he approaches people with a face that inspires fear of the consequences of bad deeds, urging people to goodness and preventing them from wickedness. Every such person is acting on behalf of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

The saints act in accordance with their inner feelings, and this conduct draws them near to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). That is because they feel the Divine admonition directly with their hearts. This is realized only through being in a spiritual state that is distant from creatures, near to the Lord of Truth and vigilant in His presence.

Yes, if your heart has found good health on this path, you will be henceforth in the proper state of detachment when dealing with your fellow creatures. You will come to be vigilantly aware of the Lord of Truth. While your fellow creatures are in private seclusion, you will be out in the public view. The open roads of the Lord of Truth and His wisdom will come to you confidentially. The Divine secret inclines toward the heart. The heart inclines toward the tranquil self [*an-nafs al-muṭma'inna*]. The lower self inclines toward the tongue. If someone addresses his speech to the people, he must therefore speak with this quality. If he does not possess such a quality, let him not speak.

○ my young brother! Although Prophethood had been conferred upon him, our master Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace) kept this a secret for several years. Then he was told:

○ Messenger, deliver	<i>yā ayyuha 'r-Rasūlu balligh</i>
that which has been sent down	<i>mā unzila ilai-ka</i>
to you from your Lord.	<i>min Rabbi-k.</i>
(5:67)	

—and after that he began to deliver the Message. As for you, whenever you have seen something, you broadcast it immediately, for there

is no way you can keep it hidden. A bag of clothes once fell down in front of you from somewhere in your house, and, without stopping to think where this had come from, you immediately opened your door and cried: “Come, buy some clothes from me!” Perhaps that bag could have been a piece of luggage belonging to your neighbor.

Do not forget that four things are the means by which your heart will be improved:

1. Paying careful attention to every morsel of food that is eaten.
2. Setting aside time for worship.
3. Preserving the charismatic marvel (keeping it secret and not spreading it abroad).
4. Abstaining from things that keep the human being away from Allāh.

With regard to paying careful attention to every morsel of food: In this context, there is no more important advice for you than this. You must not forget that this matter [of improving the heart] can only be achieved by guarding against seemingly wholesome things that are actually unlawful and dubious, by remembering that you are in the presence of the Lord of Truth, and, in parallel with these requirements, by means of a serious resolve and commitment to protecting the religion.

If someone is a true believer, he will act with sensitivity in his eating and drinking, and he will be very careful in this regard. He will lend his ear to the Book of Allāh and the Sunna of Allāh’s Messenger, to the point where he attains by this path to nearness to his Master. He will then command what He has commanded, and forbid what He has forbidden. He will teach what He has taught, and provide help by means of His help.

Before you die, you must renew your covenant with Allāh. While the dust of the Resurrection is rising, you will see more clearly these points that have been mentioned.

O lazy ones, O ignorant ones, O heedless ones! I am calling out to you. After a while, you will know better what this means. That is to say, when the news of death comes to you, you will know and understand it for certain.

Fourth Sermon

The Proprieties of Private Retreat [*Khalwa*]

○ my young brother! While in the private retreat [*khalwa*], you need to practice the vigilant awareness that will save you from sins, protect you from slips, keep you away from unlawful and dubious things, and remind you of the merciful gaze of the Lord of Truth (Exalted is He).

Yes indeed, throughout the time you spend in the private retreat, you are reckoned to be both needy and hard-pressed in this regard. By means of your patience and steadfastness, it is possible to apply the medicine that will cure this neediness and stress.

After this, you need to do battle with the lower self, bad habits and the devil. The ruination of most human beings is the result of slips. The ruination of the ascetics [*zāhidīm*] is the result of lustful desires. The ruination of the spiritual deputies [*abdāl*] is the result of thoughts and illusions entertained in their private retreats. The ruination of the champions of the Truth [*ṣiddīqīn*] occurs at certain moments when the protection of their hearts distracts them, because they are asleep at the door of the Sovereign Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

As for the saints, they are at the station of the summons. They summon their fellow creatures to intimate knowledge of the Lord of Truth, and constantly address their hearts with the words:

“O hearts! O spirits! O human beings! O jinn! O seekers of the Sovereign Lord! Come quickly to the door of the Sovereign Lord. Run toward it with the feet of your hearts, with the feet of your true devotion, your affirmation of Oneness, your intimate knowledge, your piety and your abstinence. Turn toward His door and spare no effort to reach it.”

This is the preoccupation of the saints. Their zealous endeavor is to enlighten their fellow creatures and improve them. As for their aspiration, it comprises the heavens, the earth and the Throne.

The spiritual meaning of private retreat [*khalwa*]

Private retreat is the practice of separation and purification from all things. When your inner world becomes purified and detached from things, the eventual result is isolation within a spiritual experience that has nothing to do with this world, the Hereafter, and things that are other than the Lord of Truth.

This is the path of purification followed by the Prophets, the Messengers, the saints and the righteous.

Listen with the ear of the inner core! In my opinion, to enjoin what is right and proper, and to forbid what is wrong and improper, is very much better than this physical confinement of the worshipful servant who is physically confined to the house of worship.

If you are not setting out to refine your manners and your conduct, your obedience to the Lord of Truth consists of mere words. If such is the case, you will be evicted from the house of proper conduct, despicable and held in contempt. The master of fine conduct is he who corrects his behavior and his manners. If you are in compliance with the Lord of Truth, good manners and politeness will seat you in His house, and there you will experience dignity and honor.

When someone loves and respects Allāh, that person is considered to be a guest in His presence. In relation to the people of the house he is visiting, the guest is not left to his own devices with regard to what he eats and drinks, how he attires himself, and other such matters. On the contrary, he is obliged to comply with his hosts and, even if it goes against his inclination, to be patient and demonstrate good pleasure.

In the heart of someone who knows Allāh, there can be no doubt that fondness for this world and the Hereafter disappears, as does the love of anything other than Allāh (Exalted is He).

It is therefore incumbent upon you that whatever you say should be for the sake of Allāh. As a matter of fact, it is more beneficial for you to lose your tongue altogether. Your whole life should be spent in obedience and worshipful service to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), although death is actually more beneficial for you. You must withdraw from the company of your fellow creatures (remove your heart from them), so that you may know Allāh. Intimate knowledge (of the Lord of Truth) has many degrees, each following the other in succession. The heart's attachment to creatures and the intimate knowledge of Allāh are directly opposite to each other, so they cannot be united. Yes indeed, by this standard all things are opposite to one another, so do not seek to bring them together! You must not occupy the heart, which is considered to be the house of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), with anything other than Him. The sole concern of the heart should be the Lord of Truth. To that house you should invite no one other than Him. The angels do not enter a house in which there are idols and statues, pictures and images, so, if your heart contains an array of images and idols, how can the love of Allāh enter therein? Yes indeed, if anything apart from Him preoccupies the heart and establishes its authority there, that thing is an idol. You must therefore smash the idols that enter the house of the heart, and you must clean that place.

○ Lord! Restore us to life in the climate of obedience and worshipful service. Resurrect us in the company of those who serve You properly, the people whose worshipful service is performed without shortcoming.

Our Lord, give us in this world
that which is good,
and in the Hereafter that
which is good,
and guard us against the torment
of the Fire [of Hell]. (2:201)

Rabba-nā āti-nā
fi 'd-dunyā ḥasanatan
wa fi 'l-ākhirati
ḥasanatan
wa qi-nā 'adhāba 'n-nār.

Fifth Sermon

The Sacred Struggle (Opposition to the Lower Self)

O servant at the door of the Lord of Truth! You must abandon the lower self and its unlawful desires. You must be the soil that is trodden by the feet of the community of the saints. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) extracts the living from the dead and the dead from the living. He brought the venerable Abraham (peace be upon him) forth from his father, who was in the state of unbelief. The believer is alive, while the unbeliever is dead. He who affirms the Oneness of Allāh is alive, whereas he who attributes partners to Allāh is dead. Allāh (Exalted is He) was referring to this when He said:

The first of My creatures to die was Iblīs.¹

O my young brother! You must not be attached to the lower self, nor to your lustful desires. You must not be attached to this world, nor to the Hereafter. You must obey none other than the Lord of Truth. If you act on this advice, you will discover a treasure that is inexhaustible. What is more, you will receive from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) a guidance behind which there is no going astray.

Your aspiration and endeavor must not be for simple things like eating, drinking, clothing and marriage. (That is because these are not the goal, but only the means by which to arrive at the goal. You must not put the means in the place of the goal.) You must not forget that the wish for each of these things comes from the lower self and natural instinct. Where is the determined aspiration of the heart and the innermost being? It is absolutely necessary to know and find that aspiration. You must not be in any doubt that this is nothing but the

¹ This is a Sacred Tradition [*Hadīth Qudsī*], not a Qur'ānic verse [*āya*].

quest for the Lord of Truth (Exalted is He). Your aspiration must be your first and foremost concern. Your firm resolve and aspiration must be purely for your Lord and the things that are at His disposal.

The counterpart of this world is the Hereafter, while the counterpart of creatures is the Creator. You must know what it means to turn away from this world toward the Hereafter, and from creatures toward the Creator.

Whatever you abandon in this world, you will find the very best of it in the Hereafter. You must be prepared for the possibility that only one day of your life is still left. You must be ready to accept the coming of the angel of death, for that arrow will strike you one day.

O traveler on the path of Reality, you must not be happy and preoccupied with the blessings you enjoy in this life, because each and every one of them will one day be removed and pass away.

You must pay extremely careful attention to this saying of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

We have already sent to peoples
that were before you,
and We visited them with
tribulation and adversity,
so that they might grow humble.

*wa la-qad arsalnā ilā
umamin min qabli-ka
fa-akhadhnā-hum bi'l-ba'
sā' i wa 'd-darrā' i
la' alla-hum yataḍarra' ūn.*

If only, when Our disaster came on
them, they had been humble!
But their hearts were hardened
and the devil made all that they used
to do seem fair to them!

*fa-law lā idh jā' a-hum
ba' su-nā taḍarra' ū
wa lākin qasat qulūbu-hum
wa zayyana la-humu 'sh-shaiṭānu
mā kānū ya' malūn.*

So, when they forgot that of which
they had been reminded,
We opened unto them the gates
of everything
until, even as they were rejoicing
in what they had been given,

*fa-lammā nasū mā
dhukkirū bi-hi
fatahnā 'alai-him abwāba
kulli shai' :
ḥattā idhā fariḥū
bi-mā ūtū*

We seized them unawares,
and lo and behold, they were
sore confounded. (6:42–44)

akhadhā-hum baghtatan
fa-idhā-hum mublisūn.



Sixth Sermon

Untitled

O learned scholar! Beware of feeling satisfaction with the name alone, and failing to do the work. When you say: “I am a scholar,” but do not put knowledge into practice, you are telling a kind of lie. What is the benefit of knowledge that is not applied to the sphere of action? How can your conscience approve of your commanding someone else to do something that you leave undone, something that you cannot do? Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

O you who truly believe,	<i>yā ayyuha 'lladhīna</i>
why do you say	<i>āmanū li-ma taqūlūna</i>
that which you do not do?	<i>mā lā taf' alūn:</i>
It is most hateful in the sight of Allāh	<i>kabura maqtan 'inda 'llāhi</i>
that you say what you do not do.	<i>an taqūlū mā lā taf' alūn.</i>

(61:2)

One night, while offering my prayer of supplication and entreaty, I said: “My God, do not deprive me of what is beneficial to me and harmless to You!” I kept repeating this sentence until I fell asleep. In my dream that night, I saw someone calling out to me: “You too! Do not refrain from work that gives you benefit, and beware of work that causes you harm!”

You must present your problem to Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) for correction. You must prove, by strict obedience to him, that you are a member of his Community. If you are not obedient to him, if you do not act in accordance with his Sunna [exemplary practice], there is no benefit in your saying: “I am a member of his Community.” When you are obedient to Allāh’s

Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in your words and your deeds, you will be included among those who enter his exalted fellowship in the Hereafter. You must surely have heard this saying of Allāh (Exalted is He):

Whatever the Messenger gives	<i>wa mā ātā-kumu 'r-Rasūlu</i>
you, take it,	<i>fa-khudhū-hu</i>
and from whatever he forbids	<i>wa mā nahā-kum</i>
you, abstain.	<i>‘anhu fa-’ntahū.</i>
And practice true devotion to Allāh.	<i>wa ’ttaqu ’llāh:</i>
Allāh is Stern in reprisal. (59:7)	<i>inna ’llāha Shadīdu ’l-‘iqāb.</i>

You must therefore adhere with the utmost strictness to the commandments of the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and keep well away from those things that he has forbidden. You must not forget that, in this world, it is only with your hearts that you can attain to nearness to your Lord. In the Hereafter, on the other hand, you will experience this nearness with your spirits and your bodies.



Seventh Sermon

Sincere Devotion

[*Ikh̄lās̄*]

First you must learn, then you must act, and you must be in the state of sincere devotion in both cases. You must pass beyond your own self and your fellow creatures, and be fully committed to Allāh Alone.

Say “Allāh!,” then leave them
to their idle prattling. (6:91)

*quli 'llāhu thumma dhar-hum
fi khawḍi-him yal' abūn.*

On this path, when forsaking your own self and your fellow creatures, you must say, as the venerable Abraham said (peace be upon him):

They are all an enemy to me,
except the Lord of All the Worlds.
(26:77)

*fa-inna-hum 'aduwwun
lī illā Rabba 'l-'ālamīn.*

Yes indeed, you must abandon your fellow creatures for a while, as long as you see them involved in harm and detriment (so that you do not get carried away by the same current). Then, once you have attained to the correct degree of the affirmation of Oneness [*tawḥīd*], and the filth and rust of polytheism [*shirk*] have left your heart, you must mingle again with your fellow creatures, befriend them, provide them with the benefit of your knowledge, and guide them to the door of Allāh's salvation, to the extent of your ability.

The death of the chosen few is experienced by withdrawing from fellow creatures and behaving toward them like a corpse. In other words, it is a matter of abstaining from seeking them out and feeling the need for them. If someone truly experiences such a death, eternal life in the presence of his Lord will become a reality for him. As for his external death, it is a matter of stopping for a moment, breathing

the spiritual air for a moment, being lost for a moment, sleeping for a moment and then reawakening.

If you wish for such a sweet death, you must therefore hold out your hand to the root of intimate knowledge and nearness, which is found on the threshold of the Lord of Truth (Exalted is He), so that the Hand of Mercy and Grace may grasp you and open for you the door of a life without end. This is indeed the everlasting revival.

Without a doubt, your heart also has its nourishment, as indicated by the saying of the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

I am surely protected in the presence of my Lord, so He will feed me and quench my thirst.

That is to say: “He will feed my innermost being with true meanings and my spirit with spiritual values, and He will nourish me with the nourishment peculiar to me.”

This being so, the person concerned will first make the heavenly ascension with his heart and his outer form, after feeding the true meanings to his innermost being. Then his outer form will be prevented from this, for his ordinary self will again be present among his fellow creatures, and he will only ascend with his heart and his innermost being.

Such are those exalted individuals who bring knowledge, work, sincere devotion and teaching together in combination. They are really and truly the heirs of Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace).



Eighth Sermon

Absolute Trust [*Tawakkul*]

If someone forsakes Allāh (Exalted is He), and relies and depends on a mere creature like himself, that person is cursed and cursed again. What a pity it is, that most people cannot rescue themselves from this curse. Few indeed are those individuals who rely and depend on Allāh (Exalted is He). If someone relies on Allāh and puts his trust in Him, that person has really clung to the soundest pole. On the other hand, if he puts his trust in a mere creature like himself, he resembles someone who grasps at water, for, when his hand is opened, it is seen to be holding nothing.

Woe unto you! Do you not think at all? Your fellow creatures meet your need for two or three days at most, but then they grow bored and give nothing more. What is incumbent upon you, therefore, is to attain to the fellowship of the Lord of Truth, and to feel sure that your needs will be provided by Him. That is because boredom does not come upon Allāh (Exalted is He), and He neither tires nor wearies of paying attention to your need, both in this world and in the Hereafter.

When someone truly believes in the Oneness of the Lord of Truth, and is at the level of certainty in affirming His Unity, he is no longer attached to anyone: not to his father, not to his mother, not to his family and not to his friend. He is stripped of the desire for wealth and prestige, and he can base his decisions on nothing apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Ninth Sermon

Deliverance from Laziness

You must beware of laziness in fulfilling the duty of worshipful service to the Lord of Truth, for He will otherwise cause you to suffer a very bad outcome. The venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was alluding to this when he said:

If the servant is slack in performing his work, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will subject him to trial and tribulation.²

Yes, He will try him at least with his wife and children, and this trial will catch him unprepared. His wife and children will begin to cause him pain, and his earnings will diminish. His son and his daughter will disobey him, and his wife will begin to hate him. Whichever way he turns, he will slip and fall. Such are the penalties for his shortcoming in obedience to his Lord. Such is the bitter result of forsaking Allāh (Exalted is He) and becoming totally preoccupied with this world.

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

What concern has Allāh for your punishment if you are thankful and believe? Allāh is All-Thankful, All-Knowing. (4:147)	<i>mā yaf' alu 'llāhu bi-'adhābi-kum in shakartum wa āmantum: wa kāna 'llāhu Shākīran 'Alīmā.</i>
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It is not permissible for anyone to argue with Allāh about his fate and destiny. The power of disposition and the verdict belong to Him (Exalted is He).

² Reported by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

He will not be questioned as	<i>lā yus' alu ' ammā</i>
to what He does,	<i>yaf' alu</i>
but they will be questioned. (21:23)	<i>wa hum yus' alūn.</i>

○ my young brother! You will receive in accordance with your determination and your aspiration. Every right is the counterpart of a duty. You must therefore be on your guard against laziness. (You must be hard-working both for this world and for the Hereafter, and never abandon the effort.) You must not forget that laziness, slackness, indolence and sluggishness open the way to eternal deprivation and a regret that has no end. You must perform your tasks and conduct your business with systematic planning, and practice the most appropriate generosity in your business and your work. That is because Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has granted you generous favor both in this world and in the Hereafter.

On the Day of Resurrection, the human being will try to remember whatever he has done in this world, both the good and bad. Real remorse will begin in those moments, but the regret and lamentation felt on that Day will be in vain. The whole point is to consider these beforehand, meaning before death, and to take the appropriate measures. When everyone has already finished threshing the harvest, how can it benefit you to think of sowing the rice and the seeds of corn? Does the noble Prophet not say (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

This world is the field of the Hereafter.^{3?}

If someone sows goodness in this world, he will gather enviable proceeds in the Hereafter. If someone sows evil and laziness, he will reap remorse and regret. (Yes, is that not so? If someone sows the wind, he will reap the whirlwind, as the saying goes. This world is nothing but a bed of soil in which good and bad seeds are planted. You must attend to making it a field prepared for goodness.)

If you wake up only when death comes to you, that awakening is useless. (It is necessary to know how to die before dying, and to be duly prepared for death.)

³ Imām al-Ghazālī has cited this Prophetic tradition [*ḥadīth*] in his work entitled *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* [Revival of the Religious Sciences].

O Lord, arouse us from the sleep of heedlessness! Remove us from the path of those who do not know You. Cause us to enter the company of those servants who rely directly on You, and who commit themselves entirely to You.



Tenth Sermon

Patience [*Ṣabr*]

○ you who truly believe,	<i>yā ayyuha 'lladhīna</i>
endure with patience,	<i>āmanu 'ṣbirū</i>
outdo all others in patient	<i>wa ṣābirū</i>
endurance, be ready,	<i>wa rābiṭū</i>
and practice true	<i>wa 'ttaqu 'llāha</i>
devotion to Allāh,	
in order that you may succeed.	<i>la 'alla-kum tuflīhūn.</i>
(3:200)	

There are many Qur'ānic verses on the subject of patience [*ṣabr*]. All of them indicate that, if someone endures with patience, he will enjoy prosperity, the highest blessing, the beautiful reward, the Divine gift of grace, and the comfort and ease of this world and the Hereafter. You must therefore be patient. You have already seen the benefit that comes in this world. You must strive to secure that which is to come in the Hereafter.

You must not be neglectful of visiting the tombs, attending the meetings held by the righteous, and engaging in good works. If you act properly in this regard, your business will be set on the straight path.

○ my young brother! You must know how to endure with patience, because the whole of this world is disaster and misfortune. If there is any exception to this, it is something very unusual and rare. There is no blessing that is not accompanied by some wisdom. There is no happiness that is not accompanied by some distress, and there is no expansiveness that is not accompanied by some narrowness.

O traveler on the path of the Truth! You must endure with patience the assault of your enemy. You will soon inflict on him the assault he deserves. You will slay him and deprive him of everything he owns. That is because patience is the cause and the key of your finding success, your being of high value, and your living as an honorable person. If you wish to be someone who is truly devout, trusting and trustworthy, you must be patient, because patience is the foundation of all good things. Where patience is concerned, if your intention is correct, and if you embark on this path for Allāh's sake, the ardent longing for nearness to Him will envelop your whole being, and your heart will be filled with this love and ardent longing.

Patience is a matter of compliance with Allāh in relation to the Divine decree and foreordainment. That is because the Divine decree and foreordainment have been established by His knowledge from all eternity, so not one of His creatures is capable of erasing them.

Yes indeed, since this has been so firmly established in the awareness of the perfect believer who has attained to certainty, he has accepted to be patient with Allāh's predestination, and he has done so of his own free choice, not under compulsion. That is because the first step of patience is compulsory, but its second step is voluntary. If you have no patience, therefore, how can you claim to be the owner of faith? If you do not demonstrate contentment, how can you say that you have acquired true knowledge and understanding? Yes indeed, such things as these are not acquired by merely laying claim to them.

When you have seen the door and settled on the threshold, and when you have come to practice patience beneath the feet of predestination and the weight of the feet of harm and benefit, there is no need for words and making claims. The whole extent of the heart [*qalb*], not of the external mold [*qālib*], will feel this heaviness. You must not depart from the place where you are as if you were a physical body without a spirit. (You must open the wide door of the heart's contentment with predestination.) It is therefore necessary to maintain a state of motionless repose, to stay unnoticed in obscurity, and, from the standpoint of the heart, the conscience, the inner being and the spirit, to remain detached from one's fellow creatures.

Eleventh Sermon

The Proprieties of Mingling with People

O traveler on the path of Reality! You must not mingle with people in the state of blindness, ignorance, heedlessness and sleep. You must always be with them in the state of conscious awareness and wakefulness. If you recognize maturity in people's character and disposition, you must harmonize with it. If you witness something that disturbs you, on the other hand, you must be on your guard against it, and you must try hard to turn them away from that fault.

According to the traditional report, the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) once said:

Constructive relationships with people are a form of charitable giving.⁴

You must give to your fellow creatures from the beneficence of your Lord. You must treat them well, with the gracious favor you receive from your Lord. You must approach them with a gentle, smiling face. If you act in this manner, you will be endowed with the characteristics of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the things you do will be in accordance with His commandments.

To be on good terms with people and in a state of harmony with them, while observing the limits set by the Sacred Law, that is an excellent path to follow. On the other hand, if your behavior with them transgresses the limits of the Sacred Law and violates the Divine good pleasure, such conduct cannot be condoned, for it is devoid of any noble virtue.

O congregation! You must know your own worth and value. You must not cause yourselves to fall to a low level, to which Allāh has not made you sink. This is referred to in the saying:

⁴ Reported by Ibn Hibbān on the authority of at-Ṭabarānī.

If someone does not know his own worth, the decrees of destiny will teach him his worth.

You must not sit, therefore, in a place from which you will be made to get up. When you enter a house, you must not sit in a place where the owner of the house does not make you sit. That is because [if you choose your own place] you will then be seated without his instruction and permission, so you may be made to get up from there against your wish. If you stubbornly resist, you will be lifted up by force and thrown outside.

It is incumbent upon you to be long-suffering, and to sever the ties of wickedness and evil. That is because pronouncements have brothers. If someone addresses a pronouncement to you, and you give him a response to it, the brothers of those pronouncements will come on the scene, and wickedness and evil will arise between you.

O miserable wretch! You must pay no attention to statements that are unnecessary and not intended for you. You must abandon fanaticism in the matter of doctrinal opinion. You must become preoccupied with things that will provide you with benefit in this world and the Hereafter.

When the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mu‘taṣim-bi’llāh (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was about to die, he said: “I am repenting to Allāh because of my unreasonable conduct in relation to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, as well as my not having followed his teaching in any respect. Many other people have complied with him.”

Well then, O traveler on the path of Reality! You must try very hard to avoid doing harm to anyone. You must carry a good intention toward everyone. You are free from this restraint only in relation to those individuals whom the Sacred Law has condemned to harsh treatment. In other words, there is no bad consequence for you in the implementation of this treatment. On the contrary, this is counted as an act of worshipful service.

If you wish for the expansion of the heart, for the heart to rest at ease, you must start by not hearing what people say. You must not pay attention to their gossip. Do you not realize that most of these people are not pleased even with the Creator, far from being pleased with

you? Do you not realize that most people are incapable of thinking straight, that they cannot see reality as it ought to be seen, and that they do not act in accordance with the Truth?

On the contrary, they deny the Truth and repeatedly tell lies.

You must be an obedient follower of those who think of nothing but the Truth and reality, because they neither hear nor speak of other things. For the sake of the good pleasure of the Lord of Truth, you must therefore endure the pain inflicted by your fellow creatures. You must be long-suffering in the face of the various trials and tribulations that put you to the test. This is a path which the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) sets forth as a regular procedure for His chosen and selected servants. It separates them from everyone, and tests them with various afflictions, disasters and trials. They suddenly reach a space as vast as this world, the Hereafter and everything beneath the Heavenly Throne, and their beings pass into extinction. Allāh then restores them to existence and fashions a brand-new creation. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) refers to this in His saying:

Then We brought him forth as another creation.	<i>thumma ansha' nā-hu khalqan ākhar:</i>
So blessed be Allāh, the Fairest of Creators! (23:14)	<i>fa-tabāraka 'llāhu Aḥsanu 'l-khāliqīn.</i>

If you notice or feel any difference between the rich man and the pauper who come to you, you are losing the path of salvation. You must be together with the patiently enduring paupers, treat them well, behave with magnanimity, and experience happiness from being together with them. The venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is alluding to this when he says:

The patiently enduring paupers will be sitting in the company of the All-Merciful on the Day of Resurrection.

Yes indeed, their hearts are already present at that session today, while tomorrow their bodies will be present there.

O Muslim congregation! If your neighbor is hungry while you have eaten your fill, you are reckoned as missing from that session.

Nevertheless, you persist in claiming to be a true believer. Where is the taste of faith?

If someone does not feed the beggar waiting at his door, by giving him the food left over by himself and his wife and his children, but drives him away from his door, that person's faith is not completely genuine. That is to say, he has not attained to perfection in faith. Yes indeed, you can soon be just like that pitiful wretch, driven like him from all the doors.

Woe unto you! Why did you not get up from your place and give that beggar something, while showing a good-hearted feeling? If you had done so, you would have combined two noble virtues in one: By getting up and approaching him with great humility, then giving him something with tenderness of heart, you would have brought magnanimity and generosity together.

Have you not heard? With his own hand, the noble Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) used to give to the needy, prepare food for his camel, milk his own goat, and wash his own clothes. He was much more modest than this. How can you claim that you have complied with him, that you have followed his exemplary practice? You are actually opposing him with your personal conduct.

In the words of the Hebrew proverb: "Either be a sincere Jew, or do not claim to follow the Torah!" I am telling you something close to this, when I say: "Either fulfill the prerequisites and principles of Islām correctly, or do not say: 'I am a Muslim!'"

Yes indeed, what is required of you is obedience and respect for the rules of Islām. This includes treating your fellow creatures well, so that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) may treat you with respect on the coming Day of Resurrection. You must accept the reality of Islām, so that this Islām of yours will be a complete surrender to Allāh (Exalted is He). You must treat the souls here on earth with compassion, so that those in Heaven may also have compassion for you.

Twelfth Sermon

Abandoning Bad Friends

O traveler on the path of Reality! You must not engage in friendship with bad people, and you must make a serious effort to abandon them. You must cut off the affection and friendship that you share with them. You must try very hard to establish fellowship and friendship with good people. You must also abandon those friends and companions who engage in friendship with bad people. You must obtain nearness with those individuals—even if they are far away—who are inclined to goodness. That is because a deep-seated, spiritual closeness will become established between you and those you love and befriend. You must therefore exercise great care in choosing the objects of your affection and friendship.

Some of the scholars were asked: “What is nearness?” To this they gave the answer: “It is love and friendship.”

O traveler on the path of the Hereafter! When you engage in fellowship with bad people, that will result in your taking a dim view of good folk, and in changing your good intentions where they are concerned. Your lapsing into such a condition is reckoned to be a deep swamp for you to fall into. You must make a serious effort not to fall. You must walk in the delightful shade of Allāh’s noble Book, so that you may find success and salvation. You must enter into the heartwarming atmosphere of the Sunna of the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), so that you may be saved for all eternity.



Thirteenth Sermon

Motivation and Encouragement to Fine Deeds

O traveler on the path of Reality! You have not been created to stay forever in this world and to pursue its pleasure and delight. While in this domain, you are going through a period of Divine trial. You are satisfied with the verbal affirmation: “There is no god but Allāh; Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh [*lā ilāha illa’llāh; Muḥammadur Rasūlu’llāh*],” and you do not truly perform the worshipful service and obedience due to Allāh. So long as you fail to do the things that are really indicated by this affirmation, the merely verbal expression gives you no benefit.

That is because faith is a matter of both speech and action. If you dive into sins, losing the path by opposing the Lord of Truth as the result of a series of slips, and if you persist in this, at the same time as indulging in neglect of the ritual prayer, the fast, alms-giving and similar duties, there is no benefit to a faith that is dry—because it bears no fruit—and it is not worthy of acceptance.

When you say: “There is no god but Allāh [*lā ilāha illa’llāh*],” you are engaged in bearing witness. If you are asked: “What is your evidence?” what response will you give? The evidence and proof of this testimony is compliance with the Divine commandments, avoidance of things that He has forbidden, patient endurance in the face of troubles and misfortunes, and surrender to the decree of destiny. These constitute the clear evidence of faith and testimony.

Yes indeed, speech without action, and action without sincere devotion and commitment to the Sunna, are not acceptable. Your knowledge tells you: “If you do not act in accordance with me, I shall be a strong piece of evidence against you, but if you do act accordingly, I shall be a convincing argument in your favor.” The venerable

Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Knowledge cries out for action, so if it responds to the call, well and good, but if not, knowledge will pass away.

In other words, the grace and blessing of that knowledge will pass away, and all that is left behind will be pain and suffering, trial and tribulation. It will not serve as an intercessor on your behalf in the presence of Allāh (Exalted is He). It will not come to your aid, not even in times of need. In spite of all your learning, you will thus be left in ignorance. Yes indeed, that knowledge will pass away, it will depart, and nothing but its husk and its dregs will be left in its wake. That is because the kernel of knowledge is action.

○ you who devote a lifetime to reading the books of knowledge! Without action, what benefit is gained by your reading and memorizing? The purpose of study is not only to learn and memorize. It is to act in accordance with your knowledge, to spread enlightenment, and thus to flow between birth and death like a fertilizing river.

As the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has told us:

On the Day of Resurrection, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say to the Prophets and scholars: "You were the shepherds of your fellow creatures, so what did you do for the members of your flock?" He will say to the kings and the rich men: "You were the keepers of my treasures. Did you use them to provide for the poor and satisfy the orphans, and to discharge My right which I made incumbent upon you?"

Yes indeed, the first obligation required of the believer is to be preoccupied with the essential acts of worshipful service. Then, after performing these correctly, he must devote his time to the customary observances, and then to the supererogatory practices and virtuous deeds. Preoccupation with the supererogatory practices, without perfect performance of the strictly obligatory duties, amounts to sheer folly and ignorance. That is because preoccupation with the supererogatory acts of worship, before those that are strictly prescribed, is simply not worthy of acceptance.

If someone acts like this, he resembles a person whom the worldly ruler summons to his service, and who then rushes into the service, not of the ruler himself, but of a man in the position of a servant to the ruler, and bows his neck in obedience to that man's commands.

According to a report transmitted on the authority of the venerable 'Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) once said:

If someone performs the prayers that are supererogatory before those that are obligatory, his likeness is that of a woman who becomes pregnant, but then aborts when the time of her delivery approaches, so that she is neither carrying an embryo nor capable of giving birth to a child.

Such is the case of someone who performs the ritual prayers. When he does not perform those that are strictly obligatory, Allāh does not accept from him those that are supererogatory.

There is a second example similar to this: He is like a merchant who engages in potentially useful expenditures, but without distinguishing his capital, without subtracting his net profit, and without knowing what he has gained and what he has lost. What is actually required of him is to preserve his capital, first of all, then to make the expenditure in accordance with the profit he has acquired.

When speaking of obligatory observance, what comes to mind should not only be acts of worship like the ritual prayer and fasting. Obligatory acts of worship also include abstaining from what is unlawful, attributing partners to Allāh (Exalted is He), and objecting to His decree and His foreordination. In the words of the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

Let there be no obedience to the creature in disobedience to the Creator.⁵

O traveler on the path of bliss! You must not take conceited pride in any deed, because all deeds are measured by their final seal. You must appeal to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) for your final seal to be good. You must also pray without ceasing for your spirit to be taken while you are engaged in the finest deeds.

⁵ Reported by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, at-Ṭabarānī, Ibn Jarīr and the venerable 'Imrān.

Beware, beware! After making repentance, you must not spoil your repentance and go back to committing sin. You must be steadfast in your repentance. If someone comes along and says: “Act in compliance with your lower self and your desires,” you must not listen to him.

You must not oppose your Lord by committing sin. You must strive to be an obedient servant. If your today is like this, your tomorrow must also be like this. In the opposite situation, if you are going to be guilty of sinful disobedience to Allāh (Exalted is He) in your last days, meaning the final moments of your life, He will make you suffer contempt and disdain, nothing will even be known about you, and there will then be no one to come to your aid.

O Lord! Be a Helper for us, so that we may truly be in a state of worshipful service and obedience to You. Do not put us to shame with the filth of sin and disobedience. Grant us goodness in this world, and in the Hereafter bestow goodness upon us and deliver us from the torment of Hell.



Fourteenth Sermon

Supplication [Du‘ā’]

○ You who bow your neck in submission to the Divine decree of destiny! You must not say: “There is no need for me to offer supplication to Allāh. That is because, if the thing I am going to ask for has been allotted and set aside in sempiternity, regardless of whether I ask or do not ask, it will come to me in any case. If it has not been allotted, that is to say, if that thing has not been set aside for me, it will not be given to me because of my asking.” On the contrary, you must ask for the good things you wish for in this world and the Hereafter, on condition that they include nothing unlawful and bad. That is because Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has commanded us to make our requests, and He has encouraged us to do so:

And your Lord has said:
“Call upon Me and I will
answer you.”

Those who scorn My service,
they will enter Hell, disgraced.
(40:60)

And do not covet that
whereby Allāh has made some
of you excel others.
To men a fortune from what
they have earned,
and to women a fortune from
what they have earned.
Ask Allāh of His bounty.
Allāh is Aware of all things.
(4:32)

*wa qāla Rabbu-kumu
'd'ū-nī astajīb la-kum.
inna 'lladhīna
yastakbirūna 'an 'ibādātī
sa-yadkhalūna Jahannama
dākhirīn.*

*wa lā tamannaw mā
faḍḍala 'llāhu ba
'ḍa-kum 'alā ba'd:
li'r-rijāli naṣībun
mimma 'ktasabū
wa li'n-nisā'i naṣībun
mimma 'ktasabū.
wa 's'alu 'llāha min faḍli-h:
inna 'llāha kāna bi-kulli
sha'in 'Alīmā.*

The venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has told us:

Ask of Allāh, while being certain of the response.

Ask of Allāh, with the palms of your hands [held open to receive].

You must not say: "I am asking, but He is not giving. For this reason I shall not ask again." You must continue to make supplication. If what you ask for is an allotment set aside for you, He will dispatch it to you, so that this will increase your faith, your certitude and your conviction in the affirmation of Oneness.

You must refrain from asking of your fellow creatures. You must turn in all your situations toward the Lord of Truth (Exalted is He), because He is the only One who meets and satisfies your needs. If what you ask for is not an allotment set aside for you, Allāh will reward you for your supplication and your request by granting you contentment, the wealth of the heart. If you are a pauper, and if you are sick, He will offset these misfortunes by opening for you the door of His good pleasure. If you are in debt, He will apply the brake to the bad intention of your creditor, and He will impel him to treat you gently and adopt an easygoing attitude. Until your situation is improved, He will make him inclined to prefer this approach. Even if He does not do these things in this world, He will prepare great delights for you in the Hereafter, as a recompense for your requests. That is because He is the Master of incomparable generosity. He is Rich and Compassionate. He will not let your wishes, requests and supplications go to waste. He will either grant them immediately or postpone them and leave them to the Other world.

In a noble Prophetic tradition, we are told:

On the Day of Resurrection, the believer will see in his record many good things that he had not hoped for, and of which he had not been aware. He will be asked: "Do you recognize these things?" His answer will be: "No, I do not know where they come from!" He will then be told: "These are in compensation for the things you asked for in the lower world. The fulfillment of your wishes has been postponed until today."

Yes indeed, whenever the believing servant asks something of Allāh, he must have remembered Him before all things. He mentions

His Existence and His Oneness over and over again, so he must have put each thing in its proper place, given each person his rightful due, renounced his own power and strength, and abandoned such blame-worthy attributes as conceit, arrogant pride and self-importance.

All of these are good and splendid deeds, for which the recompense is stored in the presence of Allāh (Exalted is He).

O traveler on the path of Reality! You must weave the network of supplication, approach the door of contentment, and turn your face away from needless words. You must never remove Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) from your heart and from your tongue.



Fifteenth Sermon

Faith [*Īmān*] and Islām

○ my young brother! If you do not have faith, you do not have certitude. When certitude does not exist, there is also no true understanding and knowledge in this connection.

These are degrees and levels of such a kind that, while your claim to be a Muslim is perfectly correct, your surrender [*taslīm*] is also genuine. You must be a Muslim who has surrendered to Allāh in all his behavior and his work. While demonstrating this surrender, however, it is incumbent upon you to observe the limits set by the Sacred Law, and to adhere to it in the proper manner.

Yes indeed, where you yourself are concerned, and also where others are concerned, you must surrender only to Allāh (Exalted is He). You must make His Sacred Law the crown on the head. In relation to Him and in relation to His creatures, you must refine your conduct and your manners.

By means of Allāh's attributes, you must bear witness to His Existence and His Oneness. You must resist the charm and splendor of the Divine creation, and engage in profound contemplation. Only in this way will you be able to gain access to the true Creator.

When the believer is endowed with intimate knowledge and certitude, he has four eyes, two of them being external and two of them internal. With his external eyes he beholds Allāh's creations on the surface of the earth. With his internal eyes he witnesses Allāh's creations in the heavens, then he removes the veils from his heart and sees Him without comparison and without qualification (as he receives the manifestations of the attributes of Majesty and Beauty).

At the same time as the veils are stripped from people, the lower self, the natural instinct and selfish desires, and from the devil and his whispered temptation, he throws away the keys of the treasures of the earth and is moved by a heart for which there is no longer any difference between gold and stone.

You must make good use of your mind, so that you can understand the things I am saying, because I am speaking as the nightingale of words. (You must be as delicate and gentle as the rose, make space for the nightingales to perch, and listen with the ear of the soul to the heartwarming melodies).



Sixteenth Sermon

Wrongdoing [Zulm]

O traveler on the path of the Truth! You must not do wrong to yourself, nor to anyone else. That is because wrongdoing is a kind of darkness, both in this world and in the Hereafter. You must work hard to avoid being one of the miserable wretches who enter into that darkness.

Wrongdoing darkens the heart, and it dirties the face and the record of deeds. To emerge into Allāh's presence on the Day of Resurrection with a darkened face, and with the record of deeds in a condition spoiled by the dirt and rust of wrongdoing, that will be a truly pitiful state.

You must neither do wrong, nor be a helper to the wrongdoer, for the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has told us:

A crier will cry on the Day of Resurrection: "Where are the tyrannical wrongdoers? Where are the helpers of the tyrannical wrongdoers? Where are those who trimmed a pen for them? Where are those who prepared an inkwell for them? Gather them all together in a coffin of fire!"

You must flee from your fellow creatures (from their improper talk and their misconduct). You must endeavor not to be a victim or a perpetrator of tyrannical wrongdoing. Even when you hold a position of power, you must make a strenuous effort not to become a tyrant. Be a victim, suffer oppression, but do not commit oppression and wrongdoing, because the help of the Lord of Truth is available to the victims, even if the victims can find no other helper.

As the venerable Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has told us:

If wrong is done to someone who can find no helper other than the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will say to him: "I shall certainly come to your aid, even if only after a time."

O Lord! Include us among Your compassionate and tender-hearted servants. Do not include us among those servants of Yours who do wrong, who break and ruin the heart, and who are rude and bad-tempered. You are the One who makes hearts tender, the One who makes tempers fine!



Seventeenth Sermon

Shunning This World

This world is a marketplace. After a while, when the darkness of the night enshrouds it, there will be no one left in that marketplace. Whatever you buy and sell in this market, you must discover its value in the Hereafter, and take great care to ensure that it is sufficient, in quantity and quality, to be of benefit to you. That is because that exalted Supervisor sees everything plainly and clearly. Nothing is hidden and closed to Him. Whatever property you have obtained from the market of this world, it will be able to benefit you on the Day of Resurrection according to its value. If it carries no value at all, it will stay on your head as an affliction.

If you proclaim the Oneness of the Lord of Truth in this marketplace, and if you perform your work there with sincere devotion, that will provide a fine subsistence in the Other market, but this is very unlikely to apply in your case.

O my believing brother! In this world you are a stranger, just as the abstinent person is a stranger in the Hereafter. As for the person endowed with intimate knowledge, he is a stranger in relation to everything other than Allāh (Exalted is He).

Yes indeed, the true believer is usually in prison in this world. Even if his sustenance is plentiful and his household is fine and abundant, if he walks around and surveys his wife and children, his property and his situation, he is still inside an invisible prison. His pleasure and delight show on his face, while his sorrow and grief are in his heart. Since he had come to know and understand this world full well, he divorced it with his heart. Yes indeed, since he had come to dread the Day when eyes will stare in terror, he took the precaution of repudiating this world with an initial legal divorce [*ṭalāq*]. While he

was in this situation, the Hereafter suddenly opened its door to him, appeared like a flash of lightning and beautified his countenance, at which point he repudiated this world with a second legal divorce. Another flash of lightning came at this point, and it seemed to coil around his neck. In this spiritual condition, he repudiated this world with a third legal divorce,⁶ then committed his whole being to waiting at the door of the Hereafter. While he was in this perfect spiritual state, the light of the Lord of Truth flashed suddenly, and he thereupon divorced the Hereafter as well.

This world said to him: “Why have you divorced me?”

To this he replied: “I saw a bride better and lovelier than you; that is why.”

The Hereafter then asked him: “Oh, why have you divorced me?”

To this he replied: “I realized that you [are not sempiternal, but] have been brought into existence and formed later [than the beginning of time]. Are you not other than the One who formed you? This being the case, how could I not divorce you?”

That is the point at which the believer’s recognition of his Lord is truly realized. He is delivered from everything other than the Lord, and he attains to perfect freedom. From that moment on, he is a stranger both in this world and in the Hereafter. He is absent from everything in every sense of everything. This world comes to be in his service, and he is not in the service of this world. This world cannot impress him with the charm it uses to impress its own admirers. If it tries to do so, its effort is in vain. He acts with complete propriety in devoting his work entirely to the Lord of Truth. He pays not the slightest attention to unnecessary things.

O traveler on the path of Reality! You must maintain a state of vigilant alertness in the ocean of this world, because very many people are drowned therein. Those who can be rescued are very few and far between. Yes indeed, that is an extremely deep sea, in which almost everyone can drown. Only Allāh Himself (Exalted is He) saves from

⁶ *Translator’s note:* In Islāmic law, the husband may revoke a first and second pronouncement of divorce [*ṭalāq*], but a third is final and irrevocable (making remarriage to the divorcée impossible, unless she has been married and legally divorced by another husband).

it those of His servants whom He wishes to save, just as, through His mercy, He will deliver His believing servants from the Fire of Hell in the Hereafter. That is because everyone without exception will cross the Bridge over Hell, and Allāh (Exalted is He) will save whomever He will. When referring to this in the Noble Qur'ān, He says (Exalted is He):

And there is not one of you but	<i>wa in min-kum</i>
shall go down to it [the Fire of Hell];	<i>illā wāridu-hā:</i>
that, for your Lord, is a thing	<i>kāna 'alā Rabbi-ka</i>
decreed, determined. (19:71)	<i>hatman maqdiyyā.</i>

On that Day, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will address this commandment to Hell: “Do not be so cold as to freeze, nor so hot as to scorch! You must grant safe passage to those believing servants of Mine who truly have faith in Me, who practice sincere devotion to Me, who earn My good pleasure, who are abstinent and devout, and who turn their hearts away from everything apart from Me!” Allāh (Exalted is He) had given such an order to the fire that Nimrod ignited.

In similar fashion, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say: “O sea of this world, O water of this world! Do not drown that servant of Mine who is seeking the Beloved of the loved ones.” The servant will thus be saved from drowning, and he will submit with patient endurance to the Divine secret and wisdom. It is a matter of fact that the venerable Moses (peace be upon him) and his people found salvation from the sea. Their patience and endurance had made this fortunate result a reality for them. Allāh bestows His grace and noble generosity upon whomever He will. He also grants incalculable sustenance to whomever He will (Almighty and Glorious is He). All good things are realized through His exalted Power. Giving without recompense, wealth and honor, dignity and abasement, all these are at His disposal. No one has any influence on Him, for He is in need of no one at all (Exalted is He).

The intelligent person turns only in the direction of His exalted refuge, duly performs the obligations of worshipful service to Him, and looks away from the door of anyone other than Him (Exalted is He).

O you miserable wretch, who turn your back on those things that are of spiritual importance! I notice that you are very strongly inclined to please your fellow creatures, and to offend the Creator. Your effort is on this path. In order to make your worldly life prosperous, you are ruining your life in the Hereafter. In the very near future, you will be one of those who get arrested. One of these days, the Sovereign of all powers will arrest you. Yes indeed, there is a Power that arrests those who are intoxicated in the multicolored worlds, and who indulge in pleasure and enjoyment. That Power will seize you one day, it will dismiss you from the position and rank you now hold, and it will drag you down by such means as poverty, abasement and sickness. It will suddenly seize you at a moment you did not expect, by attacking you with hardship, grief and woes. It will make you perplexed by directing people's tongues and hands to abuse you, and it will turn all creatures against you. When that time comes, what will you do? With whom will you take refuge? From whom will you expect help? You must open your eyes!

Since this is the state of affairs, if you are asleep you must wake up. You must rip the curtain of heedlessness apart. You must attend the High Court of the Lord of Truth. You must weep and wail, shedding many bitter tears. You must weep until the tears of your eyes become the river for the boat of the heart.

O Lord! Include us among Your worthy servants. Do not include us among those miserable wretches who waste their lives in heedlessness. Graciously endow us with openness of heart, so that we may be able to perceive Your Power and Your Majestic Glory!



Eighteenth Sermon

Servitude (to the Lord of Truth)

○ you who seek to attain to the degree of worshipful servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*]! Where and on what level is your servitude in relation to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? You must strive hard to know and practice the reality of servitude. You must pursue a path that is moderate in all your actions, and that is satisfactory in this regard. You are a slave who has fled from your Master. You must return to Him, bow down before Him, and obey His command with submissive humility. You must beware of those things that He has forbidden. You must be patient with His decree. You must be in compliance with Him (where His decree and foreordination are concerned). Once these matters are perfected on your part, only then will your servitude to your Master be perfected. The secret of sufficiency will then have come to you.

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is referring to this when He says:

Surely Allāh will suffice
His servant? (39:36)

a-laisa ‘llāhu bi-kāfin
‘abda-h.

So long as your servitude to Him is right and proper, He will love you and instill the strength of His love in your heart. You will then be in the spiritual state of intimate familiarity with that love. In this protective shade, He will draw you near to Himself without any difficulty and without your having to ask. When this is the case, you will no longer desire the fellowship of anyone other than Him, and you will take no pleasure in such fellowship. In this fortunate state, you will be well pleased with Him. If He makes the surface of the

earth seem narrow to you, and if He closes all its doors, you must not be displeased with Him. At the same time, you must not approach the door of anyone other than Him, and you must not eat the food of anyone apart from Him. In this climate, you will attain to the condition of the venerable Moses (peace be upon him), concerning whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And we had forbidden foster-mothers *wa ḥarramnā ‘alai-hi ‘l-marāḍi*
to him before then. (28:12) *‘a min qablu.*

Yes indeed, our Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the Witness to everything, and His knowledge has enveloped everything. Everything is subject to His vigilant supervision, and He is even closer to us. None of us can remain independent of Him, for the whole universe is in need of Him.

○ traveler on the path of the Hereafter! When the Divine decree and foreordainment come, you must be as speechless as the stone in relation to Allāh, so that you may be the recipient of many of His gracious favors. Have you not heard how, in order to learn knowledge and wisdom, the apprentice had his tongue clipped in the presence of Galen [the master physician]? By means of this conduct and his silence, the apprentice became the inheritor of all his professor’s sciences.

Your nonsensical talk and arguing, your insolent attitude toward the Divine foreordainment, and your baseless objections, have made you so stiff that the Lordly wisdom cannot enter your heart.

○ my brother of the heart! When you wish to speak, you must speak with good intention. When you are silent, you must be silent with good intention. If someone does not correct his intention before the action, and does not carry a good intention, his action will not be a genuine action. Good intention must therefore precede the action. If you speak or keep silent without relying on a good intention, you must know that you are a sinner. In other words, your intention, your speaking and your silence are all outside of the Sunna [the exemplary practice of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace)]. Yes indeed, is this not so? Whenever your situation changes, whenever your provisions are in short supply, you promptly change yourself.

What is the point of such fickleness for the sake of a morsel of food? As if your personal dignity is something to be taken lightly, you are denying all its benefits. In this regard you resemble cruel tyrants, who mock and ridicule the victim by saying things like: “Do it! Don’t do it! Why did you do it?” Are such words and deeds worthy of a servant who truly knows Allāh?

Yes indeed, your acting and behaving like this can result in your being banished from His presence and exposed to His anger.

O son of Adam! Who are you? You have been created from a mean and vulgar fluid. Consider the beginning of creation and the matter from which you originate. You must be humble-hearted in relation to your Lord. You must bow down low in His presence. If the tree of true devotion has not produced green leaves in your heart and your inner world, you are worthless both in the presence of Allāh and in the presence of your fellow creatures. You must not forget that this world is the wisdom of the Hereafter, and both of them are wisdom pure and simple.

All forms of well-being and good health reside in obedience to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and this is realized in general by compliance with the Divine commandments and avoidance of all things that are forbidden, at the same time as patient endurance of the Divine decree and foreordination.

If Allāh responds to someone’s plea, Allāh will also answer him with His mercy, and He will make sure that his fellow creatures obey him.

The clothing of the hypocrite is clean, but his heart is in a state of deficiency. He secures his livelihood by using his religion as a tool. In actual fact, he does not seek to avoid anything that is unlawful and dubious. He consumes unlawful food without any attempt at secrecy. Even if this state of his remains unnoticed by the ordinary people, it does not go unnoticed by the special few. His abstinence and true devotion are based entirely on outward show. From this perspective, while his outer being is highly developed, his inner being is in ruins.

O traveler on the path of the Truth! You must keep yourself at a distance from others apart from the Lord of Truth. In relation both to

your own self and to your fellow creatures, you must be like a corpse, so that the veils between you and your Lord may be removed.

Perhaps you are going to ask: "How should I die? How should I be like a corpse?" To that we shall respond by telling you: "You must die to complying with your lower self, to the natural instincts of passion, to habit and its attachments. You must not comply with your fellow creatures, and you must not cling to their material means. You must cut off the hope you pin on them, abandon partnership with them, and as a result, give up wishing for anything whatsoever apart from the Lord of Truth. You must perform all your works for the sake of Allāh. You must not seek His blessings with greedy desire. You must demonstrate contentment with His management, His decree and His actions."

Once you have acted like this, you will have died in relation to your lower self. You will become alive and discover life in accordance with Allāh's predestination. Your heart will then become the dwelling place for His love, and He will manage that dwelling place as He sees fit. Your heart will reside in the Ka'ba of His nearness. Wrapped in His protective covering, it will remember the Lord of Truth and forget all others apart from Him.

O traveler on the path of the Truth! You must purify your heart by eating lawful food. You are surely always aware of the Might and Power of your Lord. You must therefore keep your food, your clothing and your heart completely clean, unstained by any kind of unlawful and dubious substance. If you act thus, you will be a purified servant.

As you must be well aware, all things go into motion because of His setting them in motion, and it is because of His stopping them that they come to a standstill, cut off from movement. Once this reality is firmly grasped, the servant is delivered from the superficiality of partnership with his fellow creatures. His fellow creatures are also delivered from attachment to anything of this kind, and they attain to peace and comfort. That is because Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) does not blame His creatures for anything that comes from His own side, and He asks for nothing from them. All that He requires is implementation of the Sacred Law, meaning compliance with the Divine commandments. Because He has graciously endowed His

creatures with sufficient knowledge to comprehend these subjects, He chastises them in proportion to their failure to put this gift to good use. Yes indeed, He has held His servants between the bounty of the knowledge bestowed upon them, on the one hand, and His commandments on the other. Where Allāh's own creatures are concerned, to know and observe His *modus operandi* is an article of faith. The One who predestines everything is He, and the One who wills is He. He is not questioned about what He does, but His creatures are questioned about what they do. This is the firm conviction of every Muslim who affirms the Divine Oneness as a believer endowed with certitude.

As you must also be well aware, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is Independent of your person and your patience, for He is in need of nothing. Nevertheless, He examines the service and work you claim to perform, to see whether you are confirming your belief in Him, or whether you are denying it.

The lover is not the owner of anything at all, for he surrenders everything he owns to his beloved. That is because he cannot combine true love with the ownership of things. If someone loves the Lord of Truth, and if he is sincere in his love, he surrenders his own person, his property and his ultimate outcome to Him, without the slightest hesitation, abandoning his own freedom of choice. He does not hold Allāh subject to suspicion because of any procedure of His, and he does not seek to hasten His judgment. In short, everything that comes from Allāh tastes sweet to him. At every turn he turns toward the Lord of Truth, so there is nothing left to turn him aside. Only one direction remains, and that is the love of the Lord of Truth. This love expels everything from his heart. Once you are like this, you will no longer love either this world or the Hereafter. You will even be estranged from your own self. Only with Allāh will you experience intimate friendship.



The Testament
[*Waṣiyya*]
of the Venerable ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

(may Allāh sanctify his innermost being)

O traveler on the path of Truth and Reality!

The advice I am bequeathing to you is this: You must be fully committed to worshipful obedience and true devotion. You must observe the external requirements of the Sacred Law. You must keep your inner feeling in good health. You must be endowed with self-sacrifice, generosity combined with openness of the heart, and a smiling face. You must give without expecting anything in return. You must abstain from inflicting injury and cruelty. You must endure ill-treatment and poverty.

You must treat the eminent personages with respect, be well-behaved with your brothers in the religion, and conduct yourself with the utmost degree of benevolence in relation the small and the great alike. Do not quarrel with other people, and do not be hostile to anyone. You must make a habit of kindness and compassion. You must prefer the spiritual paupers to your own self. You must refrain from accumulating wealth, unless it is by lawful means. You must forsake companionship with unworthy characters who are not at the degree and level of those who devote themselves to the Truth and Reality. In both religious and worldly matters, You must endeavor to be helpful to the Muslims.

I advise you to preserve your personal dignity while engaging in friendship with the rich, and to be open-hearted and sincere while engaging in fellowship with the poor. By acting like this and walking

on this path, you will ensure your respect for the Might and Power of the Creator, and ensure the permanence of this respect.

In the chains of the material means, you must not hold Allāh (Exalted is He) subject to suspicion. You must find trust and confidence in Allāh under all conditions and circumstances. You must not neglect the rights of your brothers in the religion, by relying on the love that is shared between you. You must persist, with an attitude of modest humility, in maintaining the fellowship of the wretched and the unfortunate. You must be very, very careful not to abandon good manners and liberal generosity. You must kill your lower self, so that you may come to life.

Of all human beings, the nearest to Allāh is the one who is most excellent in moral character.

The noblest of all deeds is to preserve the secret of your paying attention to nothing other than Allāh.

You must resolve to be patient with genuine advice. Instead of worldly goods, two things are enough for you: Companionship with the spiritual pauper, and service to the saint.

The genuine spiritual pauper is someone who accepts nothing as wealth apart from Allāh.

Your aggressive behavior toward those beneath you is sheer weakness. Your presumptuous behavior toward those above you is sheer pride and conceit. Your behaving like this toward your equals is bad moral character its very self.

Spiritual poverty and Şūfism, both of these are serious matters. You must not mix them with silly things.

May Allāh graciously enable us, and you, and all the Muslims, to attain to virtue, goodness and righteousness. *Āmīn!*

In every situation and activity, you must remember Allāh, because remembrance is all-embracing. You must cling tight to Allāh's spiritual rope, because this rope is the instrument that does away with injuries and perils. You must be well-prepared for the advent of the Day of Judgment, because that will surely come about.

As you must know, you are responsible for your words and your actions. When you are engaged in your work, you must concentrate on what is more appropriate, whatever that may be. You must not leave your present task until some future time, because you will have other preoccupations when that time comes.

Beware, beware! You must not employ your limbs and organs in unnecessary things. You must select the task that is best suited to each member of the body.

You must obey Allāh, Allāh's Messenger and those who govern on their behalf. You must pay their rightful due, and be patient with things that are required by them. You must not attempt to press your own rightful claim immediately.

You must not neglect the prayer of supplication [*du'ā'*] at any time. In relation to the Muslims, you must be endowed with good opinion and good intention. You must be one of them in their company, and strive to accomplish things that you know to be good for them. If you harbor some bad feeling toward another person, you must not stretch out on your bed. If someone does you wrong, you must pray for him with goodness and right guidance. You must recognize Allāh as the only Supervisor.

You must take care to eat lawful food. About things you do not know, you must ask those individuals who acquire knowledge for Allāh's sake. In relation to Allāh, you must always feel a sense of shame. Your fellowship must be with Allāh. In fellowship with anyone else, you must also be in Allāh's fellowship. You must make a charitable donation every morning, in keeping with your financial strength. When evening comes, you must perform the funeral prayer for the sake of all the Muslims who have died that day (you must make supplication and seek forgiveness on their behalf).

When you have performed the evening prayer, you must plunge into contemplation, and then perform the ritual prayer for guidance in choosing the best option [*ṣalāt al-istikhāra*]. Every morning and evening, you must recite seven times the supplication:

O Allāh, protect us from the
Fire of Hell!

*Allāhumma ajir-nā
'adhāba 'n-nār.*

In the morning and the evening you must also recite the last three verses of the Sūra of the Mustering [*al-Ḥaṣhr*], saying three times:

I take refuge with Allāh, the
All-Hearing, the All-Knowing,
from Satan the accursed!

*a'ūdhu bi'llāhi
's-Samī' i 'l-'Alīm:
mina 'sh-shaitāni 'r-raḥīm.*

Allāh is the only Source of enabling grace!

There is no might nor any power except with Allāh, the All-High,
the Almighty.



The Testament

[*Waṣīyya*]

bequeathed by the venerable ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī
(may Allāh sanctify his innermost being)
to his son, ‘Abd ar-Razzāq

○ my son! May Allāh (Exalted is He) bestow His enabling grace upon us, and upon you and all the Muslims.

First of all, I am advising you to practice true devotion to Allāh, to worship Him in the proper manner, and to observe the limits set by the Sacred Law.

You must know that this Spiritual Path of ours is founded upon the Book and the Sunna, as well as integrity of the feelings, generosity of the hand and openness of the heart. The foundation of this edifice also includes abstinence from causing injury and pain, endurance of the suffering that is to come, and readiness to pardon our Muslim brethren for their mistakes and shortcomings at our expense.

I am also advising you to be respectful toward the great leaders of Islām and the men of knowledge, to be kind to everyone great and small, not to treat anyone with hostility, except those who malign your religion, and to refrain from quarreling and argument.

○ my son, you must also know that the true significance of spiritual poverty is that you are not in need of anyone like yourself, while the true significance of spiritual affluence is that you are always independent of anyone like yourself. As for Ṣūfism [*taṣawwuf*], it is a spiritual concept and a state of being; it is not mere tittle-tattle. When you see a spiritual pauper, you must therefore not begin by trying to provide him with useful knowledge, but rather by trying to be helpful to him with sympathy and gentle kindness. That is because knowledge will

seem foreign to him, whereas sympathy and gentle treatment will appear more friendly.

You must also know that Ṣūfism is built on eight fine virtues, namely:

1. Liberal generosity.
2. Contentment.
3. Patience.
4. Symbolic instruction.
5. Living away from home.
6. Wearing the dervish cloak made of coarse wool [*ṣūf*].
7. Wandering travel (in a state of abstinence).
8. Spiritual poverty.

- Liberal generosity is the special virtue of Allāh's Prophet Abraham [*Ibrāhīm*] (peace be upon him).
- Contentment is the special virtue of His Prophet Isaac [*Ishāq*] (peace be upon him).
- Patience is the special virtue of His Prophet Job [*Ayyūb*] (peace be upon him).
- Symbolic instruction is the special talent of His Prophet Zachariah [*Zakariyyā*] (peace be upon him).⁷
- Life in exile is the special characteristic of His Prophet Joseph [*Yūsuf*] (peace be upon him).
- Wearing the coarse woolen cloak is the special property of His Prophet John the Baptist [*Yahyā*] (peace be upon him).
- Wandering travel is the special feature of His Prophet Jesus [*Īsā*] (peace be upon him).

⁷ This symbolic instruction is clearly referred to in the Qur'ānic verse:

[Zachariah] said: "My Lord,
appoint a sign for me."

He said: "The sign to you is that
you shall not speak to mankind
for three days except by signals."

(3:41)

qāla Rabbi 'j' al lī āya:

qāla āyatu-ka

allā tukallima 'n-nāsa

thalāthata ayyāmin illā ramzā.

- Spiritual poverty is the special characteristic of His Prophet and Messenger, our dear friend, our chieftain and our intercessor, Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

O my son, you must make friends with the rich, while preserving your dignity and honor, and you must befriend the poor with humble openheartedness.

You must never fail to practice sincere devotion. You must not forget that sincere devotion means forgetting about the impression you may be making on your fellow creatures [*khalq*], and paying constant attention to the view of Allāh, the Creator [*Khāliq*].

Where the material means are concerned, you must not entertain suspicious doubts about Allāh. You must rely on Allāh, and on Him Alone, in all circumstances and conditions. You must not entrust your needs to other people, on the basis of some connection between you and them, such as kinship, affection and friendship.

You must provide the spiritual paupers with three forms of service. The first of these is modest humility. The second is good moral conduct. The third is clarity of heart. You must put your lower self to death, so that you may come to life. The nearest of all creatures to Allāh (Exalted is He) is the one whose character is most expansive and tolerant.

The most meritorious of all deeds is the preservation of the innermost being from paying attention to anything apart from Allāh.

When you are in the company of the spiritual paupers, you must engage in the mutual counseling of patience and the mutual counseling of truth. As far as this world is concerned, two things should be enough for you: the fellowship of a spiritual pauper and respect for the friends of Allāh.

You must know that the genuine spiritual pauper is enriched by nothing apart from Allāh (Exalted is He), and nothing else will satisfy him.

You must also know that aggressive behavior toward someone below you is actually a form of weakness, while such behavior toward someone superior to you is a form of boastful pride.

Spiritual poverty [*faqr*] and spiritual culture [*taṣawwuf*] are two very

serious matters, so you must beware of mixing them with things that are not serious.

This is my advice to you, and to anyone else among the seekers who is capable of heeding it. Only Allāh (Exalted is He) can enable you, and us, to explain and understand the things that I have set forth here. May Allāh include us among those who follow in the footsteps of the righteous forebears [*salaf*], in honor of our master, our Prophet and our intercessor, Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace). May Allāh bless him, his loyal followers and his Companions, and may He grant them abundant peace, until the Day of Judgment.

Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of All the Worlds.



The Seven Levels or Stations of the Self [*Nafs*]

1. The “instigator” [*al-ammāra*]

The attributes of the instigating self [*an-nafs al-ammāra*] are cupidity, greed, ignorance, wickedness, envy, and anger.

Deliverance from this, meaning the possibility of passing beyond this level, can be obtained by invoking the first Name, which is: “There is no god but Allāh [*lā ilāha illa ’llāh*].” The number of repetitions is seventy thousand. As soon as this number has been completed, you must perform two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak’atain*], reciting in each cycle the Opening Sūra of the Book [*Fātiḥat al-Kitāb*] and an additional Sūra. After the final salutation [*salām*], you should offer the following prayer of supplication [*du’ā’*]:

O Allāh, I hereby purchase
my instigating self from You
with these seventy thousand.

*Allāhumma innī ashtarī min-ka
nafsi ’l-ammārata
bi-hādhi-hi ’s-sab’īna alfā.*

2. The “ensorious” [*al-lawwāma*]

The attributes of the censorious self [*an-nafs al-lawwāma*] are passion (wicked selfish lusts), lying and fraud, cunning, vain conceit, desire (for things that are not permitted) and coercion.

Deliverance from it is obtained by invoking the second Name, which is *Allāh* (Magnificent is His Majesty). The number of repetitions is sixty thousand. As soon as this number has been completed, two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak’atain*] should be performed, as in the case of the instigating self. Then, after the final salutation [*salām*], you should offer the following prayer of supplication [*du’ā’*]:

O Allāh, I hereby purchase my
censorious self from You
with these sixty thousand.

*Allāhumma innī ashtarī min-ka
nafsi 'l-lawwāmata
bi-hādhi-hi 's-sittīna alfā.*

3. The “inspired” [*al-mulhama*]

The attributes of the inspired self [*an-nafs al-mulhama*] are humble submissiveness without expecting anything in return, repentance, patience and endurance.

Deliverance from it is obtained by invoking the third Name, which is *Hū* [He]. The number of repetitions is fifty thousand. As in the other cases, two cycles of ritual prayer should be performed. The following supplication [*du‘ā’*] should then be made:

O Allāh, I hereby purchase
my inspired self from You
with these fifty thousand.

*Allāhumma innī ashtarī min-ka
nafsi 'l-mulhamata
bi-hādhi-hi 'l-khamsīna alfā.*

4. The “tranquil” [*al-muṭma‘inna*]

The attributes of the tranquil self [*an-nafs al-muṭma‘inna*] are satisfaction, generosity, knowledge, trust, endurance, reality, contentment and thankfulness.

Deliverance from it is obtained by invoking the fourth Name, which is *Ḥaqq* [Truth]. The number of repetitions is forty thousand. As in the other cases, two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak‘atain*] should be performed. The following prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*] should then be made:

O Allāh, I hereby purchase my
tranquil self from You
with these forty thousand.

*Allāhumma innī ashtarī min-ka
nafsi 'l-muṭma‘innata
bi-hādhi-hi 'l-arba‘īna alfā.*

5. The “contented” [*ar-rāḍiya*]

The attributes of the contented self [*an-nafs ar-rāḍiya*] are charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], abstinence, remembrance and ardent love.

Deliverance from it is obtained by invoking the fifth Name, which is *Ḥayy* [Living]. The number of repetitions is thirty thousand. As in the other cases, two cycles of ritual prayer should be performed. The

following supplication [*du‘ā’*] should then be made:

O Allāh, I hereby purchase my contented self from You with these thirty thousand.	<i>Allāhumma innī ashtarī min-ka nafsi ‘r-rāḍiyata bi-hādhi-hi ‘s-thalāthīna alfā.</i>
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6. The “pleasing” [*al-marḍiyya*]

The attributes of the pleasing self [*an-nafs al-marḍiyya*] are goodness of moral character, gentleness, nearness [to the Lord], and adherence to the exemplary conduct of the Chosen One [*sunnat al-Muṣṭafā*] (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

Deliverance from it is obtained by invoking the sixth Name, which is *Qayyūm* [Eternally Self-Sustaining]. The number of repetitions is twenty thousand. As in the other cases, two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak‘atain*] should be performed. The following prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*] should then be made:

O Allāh, I hereby purchase my pleasing self from You with these twenty thousand.	<i>Allāhumma innī ashtarī min-ka nafsi ‘l-marḍiyyata bi-hādhi-hi ‘l-‘ishrīna alfā.</i>
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7. The “sincere” [*al-ṣamīma*] (also called the “pure” [*aṣ-ṣāfiya*])

The attributes of the seventh self [*an-nafs aṣ-ṣamīma*], which is also called the pure self [*an-nafs aṣ-ṣāfiya*], are seclusion, silence, truthfulness, helpfulness, fidelity and compliance with the commandments of Allāh (Exalted is He).

Deliverance from it is obtained by invoking the seventh Name, which is *Qahhār* [All-Prevailing]. The number of repetitions is ten thousand. As in the other cases, two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak‘atain*] should be performed. The following prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*] should then be made:

O Allāh, I hereby purchase my sincere (or pure) self from You with these ten thousand.	<i>Allāhumma innī ashtarī min-ka nafsi ‘ṣ-ṣamīmata (awī ‘ṣ-ṣāfiyata) bi-hādhi-hi ‘l-‘asharata ālāf.</i>
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Then, when you have obtained deliverance from all these levels of the self, meaning when you have passed beyond them, you will

come to be one of the perfect élite [*al-khawāṣṣ al-kāmilīn*]. Praise be to Allāh, Lord of All the Worlds—abundant praise, eternally and everlastingly.



A Few of the Pithy Sayings of the Venerable ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

(may Allāh sanctify his innermost being)

1. A heart that does not believe is like a cage that has no bird inside it.
2. So long as your heart does not support what is on your tongue, you cannot take a step toward the Lord of Truth.
3. O my Lord! Enter the house of our heart without the slightest hesitation, because there is nothing in it whatsoever apart from the pain of separation from You.
4. When you have committed a sin, you must not lose hope of Allāh’s mercy. You must use the water of repentance to wash away the dirt of sin that has been smeared upon you.
5. The suns of those who were before us (before Islām) have set. Our sun will remain forever in the highest places of the sky, and it will never set.
6. The whole of your aspiration and endeavor must not be for simple things like eating, drinking, clothing and marriage. That is because these are not the goal, but only the means by which to arrive at the goal.
7. Four things are the basic means by which the heart is improved and set in proper order:
 - Paying very careful attention to every morsel that is eaten.
 - Setting time aside for worship.
 - Protecting the charismatic marvel (by keeping it hidden and trying not to broadcast it around).

- Refraining from things that keep the human being at a distance from Allāh.
8. While eating lawful food is a radiant light, eating unlawful food is a suffocating darkness. Eating unlawful food kills the heart, whereas the lawful morsel brings the heart to life.
 9. You must not take conceited pride in any deed, because deeds are measured on the basis of their final seal (their ultimate condition).
 10. While on the ocean of this world you must be vigilant. You must be extremely sensitive, because many people are drowned and lost in that ocean.



**More fine sayings
of the Venerable ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī**

(may Allāh sanctify his innermost being)

1. Consider the feeling that rules your life, for then you will understand what you are worth.
2. The greatest happiness is not being dominated by happiness.
3. Our enemies are our greatest moral teachers, because they thrust our faults in our faces.
4. It is dangerous for a human being to be too self-confident.
5. The purpose of education is not to make a machine, but to make the human being.
6. Do you wish to be the master of a good servant, with whom you will be satisfied? If so, you must perform service for yourself.
7. You must keep your judgment clear of the mists of vain conceit.
8. Compared to the pleasure given by granting pardon, the pleasure given by exacting revenge is very faint indeed.
9. You must be such an ardent lover of truthfulness, that every statement you make assumes the quality of a solemn oath.
10. When your soul is bored, you must work hard.
11. Our strength is much greater than our will. In order to conceal this shortcoming, whenever we cannot perform a task, we say: “It is not possible....”
12. The human being is not in control of his feelings, but he is in control of his movements.
13. We have been created to rely on one another. If a stone is removed from a wall, as if to demonstrate the risk of that wall’s

collapsing, and if one of us withdraws, we are left face to face with the danger of its collapse.

14. The remedy for poverty is not to bear grudges against the rich.
15. Do not trust a person who does not trust himself.
16. The human being obtains some of his misfortunes by failing to attend to his own comfort.
17. You must not do anything while you are angry. Would the sail be hoisted in the storm?
18. When a person's authority is great, his effort and his caution must also be great.
19. To be a great man is easier than being a good man.
20. Are you not fond of life? If not, you must not waste your time, because life is a garment made from the cloth of time.
21. The display of fame most often suppresses the voice of conscience.
22. Blood is washed with water, not with blood.
23. Happiness does not exist in a place where justice does not exist.
24. Your most real enemies are the greed, the envy and the jealousy that live in your heart. These are the soldiers of the instigating self [*an-nafs al-ammāra*].⁸
25. For others it is justice, while for us it is compassion.
26. The fly does not enter the mouth that is shut.
27. We have not invented courtesy in order to show off the goodness that does not exist in ourselves.
28. Success is a letter delivered by three mailmen. These mailmen are competence, endeavor and good fortune.
29. To reach and pass by the goal is the same as not reaching it.
30. Nothing can kill the pride of the lower self, but everything serves to enhance it.
31. Those who make fun of you, those who try to get rid of you, they are the people whose applause you most often seek to obtain.

⁸ See p. 169 above.

32. The thoughts of women are constant. From this point of view, the clever person does not shun the company of women.
33. Cowardice is the one thing that cannot be repaired by any means.
34. To live without commotion provides consolation for an unsuccessful life.
35. Hope is the money given on loan by happiness.
36. A man who has no confidence in himself can accomplish nothing.
37. Smiling is the shield of the bashful.
38. The best of men is the person who is most beneficial to others.
39. That which joins minds together is telling the truth. Lying serves no purpose other than separation.
40. Conscience is the best of the books of morality, so we must always make reference to it.
41. If we do not stick to the path that He has shown, the worship of Allāh is no more than an empty word.
42. The success of a human being is measured by the effort he has exerted in order to achieve that success.
43. Only great spirits experience the triumph of goodness.
44. Trying to discover the faults of other people amounts to making no effort to deal with those in oneself.
45. People who miss the opportunity are many, but there is no one whom the opportunity misses.
46. When someone rises high, he raises all spirits and this world too.
47. Good fortune is dependent on doing good work.
48. If you claim to have understood a reality, you must only do so after putting that reality into practice in your own life.
49. The best means of taking revenge on a man is not to resemble that man.

About the Translator

Muhtar Holland was born in 1935, in the ancient city of Durham in the North East of England. This statement may be considered anachronistic, however, since he did not bear the name Muhtar until 1969, when he was moved—by powerful experiences in the latihan kejiwaan of Subud—to embrace the religion of Islām.*

At the age of four, according to an entry in his father's diary, he said to a man who asked his name: "I'm a stranger to myself." During his years at school, he was drawn most strongly to the study of languages, which seemed to offer signposts to guide the stranger on his "Journey Home," apart from their practical usefulness to one who loved to spend his vacations traveling—at first on a bicycle—through foreign lands. Serious courses in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and Danish, with additional smatterings of Anglo-Saxon, Italian, German and Dutch. Travels in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. Then a State Scholarship and up to Balliol College, Oxford, for a degree course centered on the study of Arabic and Turkish. Travels in Turkey and Syria. Then National Service in the Royal Navy, with most of the two years spent on an intensive course in the Russian language.

In the years since graduation from Oxford and Her Majesty's Senior Service, Mr. Holland has held academic posts at the University of Toronto, Canada; at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, England (with a five-month leave to study Islamic Law in Cairo, Egypt); and at the Universiti Kebangsaan in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (followed by a six-month sojourn in Indonesia). He also worked as Senior Research Fellow at the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, England, and as Director of the Nūr al-Islām Translation Center in Valley Cottage, New York.

*The name Muhtar was received at that time from Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, of Wisma Subud, Jakarta, in response to a request for a suitable Muslim name. In strict academic transliteration from the Arabic, the spelling would be Mukhtār. The form Muchtar is probably more common in Indonesia than Muhtar, which happens to coincide with the modern Turkish spelling of the name.

